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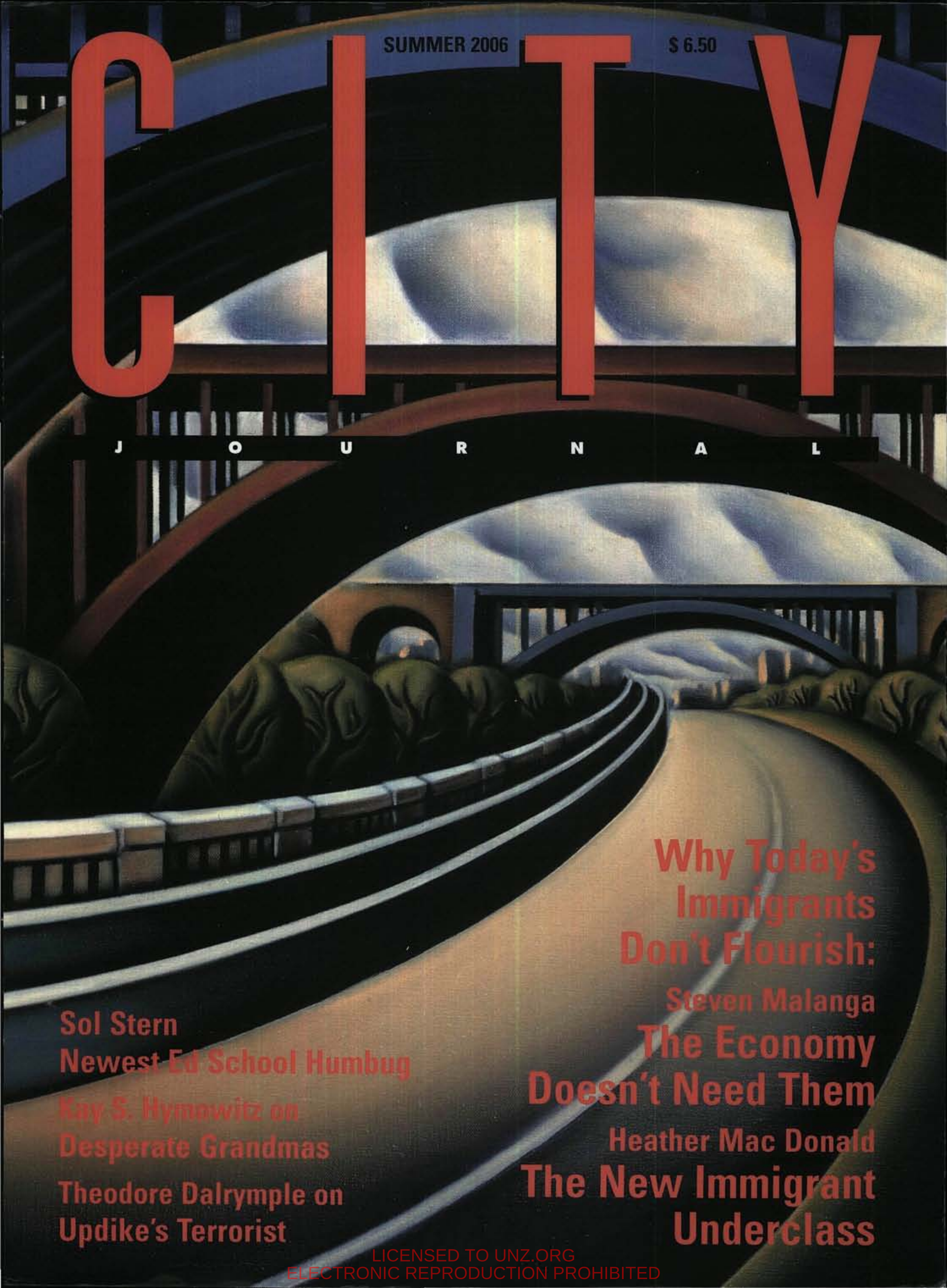

Why Today's Immigrants Don't Flourish:

Steven Malanga
The Economy Doesn't Need Them

Heather Mac Donald
The New Immigrant Underclass

Sol Stern
Newest Ed School Humbug

Kay S. Hymowitz on
Desperate Grandmas

Theodore Dalrymple on
Updike's Terrorist

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Rudolph Giuliani

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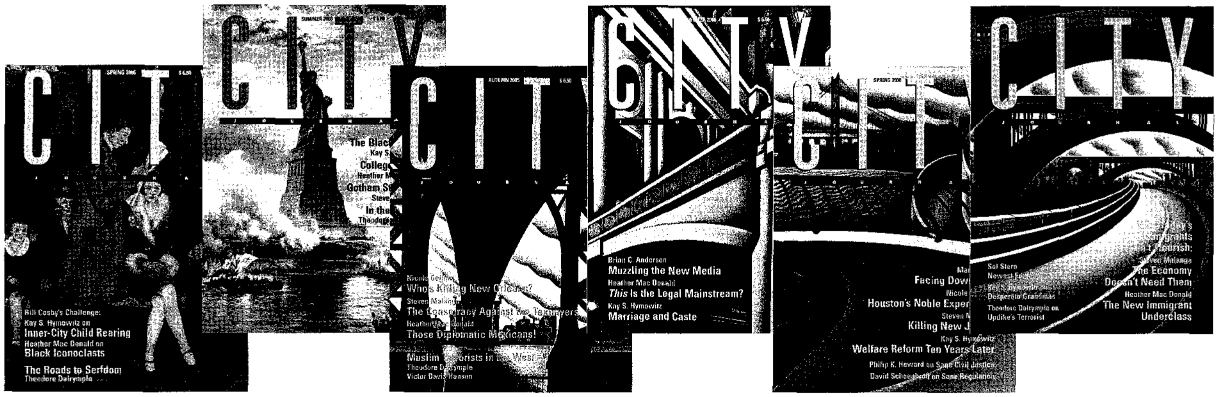

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"The journal that saved the city."

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In Prospect

Immigration reform tops the topics on which people of goodwill can disagree—as we've found here at the Manhattan Institute, *City Journal*'s publisher, where valued colleagues support the current push for "comprehensive" reform, which *City Journal* opposes, for reasons our two cover stories explain. We at *City Journal* have experienced the ambivalence personally. Mostly the children or grandchildren of immigrants—or immigrants ourselves—we publish from the great immigrant metropolis, lit by the Statue of Liberty's torch, under which our forebears passed. We know what our city, our nation, and we ourselves owe to immigrants. And watching today's newcomers on their delivery bikes or building-repair scaffolds, who can't share President Bush's belief that these are hardworking people who deserve a chance?

We know that it's been our nation's genius to turn polyglot newcomers into Americans quickly. America being a nation based on belief, not bloodlines, all they needed was to assent to a simple creed about liberty, the rule of law, and the pursuit of opportunity—and presto.

But when we first sent a writer to report on that assimilation's progress, we got grim news. He began visiting priests serving upper Manhattan's newly arrived Hispanics. The priests said that they were connecting their charges to every government benefit available—including signing their U.S.-born children up as child-only welfare clients—and pressing their schools to teach the kids in Spanish, to preserve their culture. These goals, our writer saw, would short-circuit the assimilation dynamo that had worked so well for previous immigrants. The new spirit of immigration, stressing dependency and separatism instead of self-reliance and Americanization, seemed made to attract the least aspiring newcomers, not the most. Dispirited, our writer asked to drop the story, and in our editorial meetings we began to discuss with greater urgency—and, soon, to publish—the troubling reports from California coming from our two native-Californian contributing editors, Heather Mac Donald and Victor Davis Hanson.

With the clamor for amnesty and guest workers rising, our issue offers two warnings. To the argument that the U.S. economy needs immigrants to do jobs Americans won't, Steven Malanga replies in his richly documented "How Unskilled Immigrants Hurt Our Economy" (page 14) that such workers aren't scarce but in such oversupply that they're pushing down one another's wages. The cheapness and marginality of their labor add little to our standard of living. The health-care, schooling, and welfare costs they impose on U.S. taxpayers—some $85,000 per high school dropout immigrant over his lifetime, says one expert—far outweigh the benefits they offer.

Some free marketers see labor as fungible, like capital: a worker is a worker, fit for any slot the economy offers. Not so, Malanga warns; workers are individuals, with their own views and values—and low-skilled Hispanic immigrants and their kids present a conundrum that for decades troubled observers of the urban underclass: In an economy teeming with opportunity, where all you need for success is to grab the free education the state offers, why do some groups stay poor? The short answer is a group culture that devalues education and assimilation—exactly the culture, Malanga shows, that too many new immigrants now bring.

Heather Mac Donald takes up this theme in "Seeing Today's Immigrants Straight," on page 28. If amnesty advocates, in normal conservative fashion, would examine the facts on the ground and trust reports from local communities, they would see that today's unskilled Hispanic immigrants—anti-education, anti-assimilationist, even anti-English-language—are becoming a new underclass, ridden with crime, illegitimacy, school failure, welfare dependency, and poverty. Just when our underclass problem looked soluble, that class has received vast reinforcements, harder to assimilate and bound to spark a welfare-state boom, with new hordes of don't-blame-the-victim functionaries.

When conservatives say that these immigrants might increasingly become GOP voters, one recalls the old immigrant joke about the manufacturer whose bad news was that he was losing a nickel on every item he sold. The good news? He'd make it up on volume.

Soundings

Crime Capital

Can new mayor Booker stem Newark's violence?

The scenario is all too familiar. Gang violence shatters the peace of a major city. Witnesses to murders get gunned down in the streets or just disappear. When arrested, criminals confidently predict that they'll soon be free. Despite the carnage, law enforcement seems like a low priority among public officials: crime units lack funds; the local police department is crooked and ineffective; successful prosecution rates are low.

New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina? No, it's Newark, New Jersey, at the end of the Sharpe James era. Americans, horrified at the lawlessness that broke out in New Orleans in Katrina's aftermath, came to understand that the violence and looting resulted from years of decay and neglect of the city's dysfunctional criminal-justice system. Though Newark has had no single defining moment like the hurricane, its parallels with New Orleans are unmistakable. They point to a massive failure not only of recently departed five-term mayor James but also of the county and state officials who have allowed patronage, corruption, and apathy to turn the state's biggest city into the Northeast's Big Easy. Now, as reform mayor Cory Booker takes office promising to get tough on crime, recent events make clear that he'll need plenty of help.

Just weeks after Booker's landslide victory, informants told authorities that the Bloods, one of Newark's most vicious gangs, planned to kill the mayor-elect, because he had made a war against crime—especially gang crime—a central campaign theme. A few weeks later, Rahway prison officials found a letter outlining a plot. Though some thought the letter a hoax, Rahway guards noted that on several occasions they had caught an imprisoned Bloods leader with a cell phone (illegal behind bars), which he was using to direct gang activities in Newark.

With its long history of sleaze and ineptitude, Newark's police department is a big part of the problem. In the 1960s, Jersey's top mobsters—Ritchie "the Boot" Boiardo and Ray De Carlo—took control of the Newark police department, instructing Mayor Hugh Addonizio (who had won office with their help) to install a mob-related police captain as department boss. The force has never recovered from the scandal. Indeed, the crooked behavior continues: in 1996, the feds busted Newark's top cop for pilfering a fund intended to bolster narcotics investigations—a huge betrayal of public trust in a city whose citizens were under siege from crime.

The arrest was just a symptom of larger problems with the department, described by the *New York Times* as "a place where corruption was long tolerated, where criminal behavior was often ignored and where would-be reformers were punished or harassed." Despite calls for reform under Sharpe James, the police often seemed little more than the mayor's bodyguards. In the 2002 mayoral race, in which Booker nearly upset James, Newark cops broke up the challenger's rallies and harassed his supporters, as the Oscar-nominated film *Street Fight* documents.

Newark's sky-high crime has never seemed to worry New Jersey pols much. The Essex County prosecutor's office handles criminal cases in the city, giving it arguably the most crucial task of any of Jersey's 21 county prosecutors. Yet it has little expertise—connections, not competence, have long governed appointments to the office, and corruption has run rampant. The state attorney general stripped one Essex County prosecutor of her powers after the indictment of four chief investigators on misconduct charges and charges that she herself had spent taxpayer money on lavish office furniture. And an investigation found that her predecessor had improperly spent some $200,000 in money seized from criminals, including $2,300 to send staff to golf tournaments.

Even as the office squandered money, its crime-fighting operations starved for funds. An investigation by Jersey's largest paper, the *Star-Ledger*, revealed that the prosecutor's crime-scene unit ran out of a converted parking garage, whose bathroom doubled as a crime-scene processing room. The unit lacked a computerized system to track evidence, and on weekends and during the evening, when most murders occur, it often had just a single CSU technician on hand. No wonder the Essex County office has one of the worst records for convictions in the state. As one juror complained, "I wouldn't allow them to investigate the murder of a cat or a dog."

Both of Jersey's political parties, steeped in a political culture where patronage and outright corruption produce feckless and lawless government, as in Louisiana, have added to Newark's criminal-justice woes. Former Democratic governor James McGreevey counted Mayor James, long boss of a powerful Newark political machine, as a key political ally, for example, and he did little when the city's murder rate spiked several years ago. Instead, in 2003, to reward James for his support, McGreevey appointed Newark's police boss superintendent of state police, despite plausible warnings that he, like Newark's Addonizio-era police chief, had mob ties. The superintendent served just seven months before the press revealed that he had ordered subordinates to bring him the files on state investigations into his activities, forcing him from office.

Before McGreevey, Republican governor Christine Todd Whitman dismantled one of the few statewide anticrime programs that actually helped Newark: a state police effort to halt the flow of drugs up Jersey's highways (and into the cities) by stopping and searching suspicious cars, especially those caught speeding. When the press accused cops of racial profiling because they disproportionately stopped black drivers, Whitman cravenly killed the program after forcing out the state police superintendent. A subsequent study by Maryland's Public Service Research Institute showed that blacks were speeding disproportionately, accounting for the higher percentage of stops. By then, however, it was too late. The number of drug charges filed by state police from highway searches fell steeply after Whitman's actions. Murders in Newark rocketed up 65 percent in the year after she ended the program, as the urban drug trade flourished.

WEEGEE (ARTHUR FELLIG)/INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY/GETTY IMAGES (4)

Into this cauldron has stepped Booker. Even as a young councilman, he had tried to draw attention to the crime plague by camping in a trailer on street corners known for their drug trade and, later, by moving into a crime-blighted public-housing complex. But it was in his two mayoral campaigns—his unsuccessful bid in 2002 and his winning one in 2006—that he reignited outrage among Newark's residents about crime, outrage seemingly missing from the city ever since most of its middle class fled to the suburbs after urban riots in the late sixties.

But Booker faces a tough task. His challenge should spark the interest of Jersey's new governor, former Wall Street exec Jon Corzine, who is grappling with the state's budget crisis. Corzine should look up from the spreadsheets and recognize that reestablishing civic order in his state's largest city is crucial to Jersey's future, all the more so because state taxpayers support Newark to the tune of some $750 million a year in aid, now that crime has shriveled the city's own tax base. Even from a fiscal view, there isn't a more important task in the state right now than ending Newark's crime spree and getting the city off state taxpayer life support. —*Steven Malanga*

Reorganizing the Reorganization

Mayor Bloomberg begins backtracking on education.

In the four years since he took control of the biggest school system in the country, Mayor Mike Bloomberg seems to have learned a few lessons. For one, he now apparently believes that the best way to raise student achievement is to devolve authority from city hall to individual schools, allowing principals to "design their own paths to success."

Or at least that's what Mayor Mike told New Yorkers at his June 12 press conference, announcing that up to 350 of the city's 1,400 schools would now officially become "Empowerment Schools," freed from many of the bureaucratic mandates of his own Department of Education. The mayor also hinted that if his latest initiative works out, more schools would join the Empowerment Zone. After all, who can gainsay success?

It's always good to see principals break the shackles of senseless rules and become more entrepreneurial. But the question that quickly comes to mind is: Why is Bloomberg doing this, and why now? Unfortunately, the city's pliant education reporters never asked. The mayor could thus frame the story as just another logical step in the glorious progression of his administration's educational reforms. In truth, the headlines should have read: MAYOR TAKES 180-DEGREE TURN ON SCHOOLS.

To see why, just read the text of Mayor Bloomberg's famous Martin Luther King Day speech in 2003, where he first laid out his initiative for restructuring the city's education system, a plan he called "Children First." Presented to the public after six months of intense secret planning, the blueprint for the reorganized system didn't leave much room for principals' autonomy or innovation. It was an imperial system, with all roads leading directly to city hall.

Bloomberg noted that in the past, local schools enjoyed too much autonomy, bringing about "a baffling profusion of approaches to teaching the three Rs throughout the city." In fact, he said, the "experience of other urban school districts shows that a standardized approach to reading, writing, and math is the best way to raise student performance across the board, in all subjects."

Based on these purported findings, Bloomberg announced that the old discredited and decentralized system would give way to "one, unified, focused, streamlined chain of command." So convinced was the mayor that top-down management of the schools was the way to go that he revealed that "the Chancellor's office will dictate the curriculum and pedagogical methods."

The "dictated" teaching approach would be the purest progressive ed: whole-language instruction in reading and constructivist math.

The mayor stuck to his guns throughout the next two school years, despite rising complaints about mindless micromanagement of classroom teachers. He defended the pedagogical "dictatorship" he had granted to Chancellor Klein, saying that proof of success was in rising test scores. As recently as six months ago, the administration was still trumpeting the "historic" results on the state's 2005 fourth-grade reading and math tests as powerful vindication of its education policies. (See my debunking of the test scores in "City's Pupils Get More Hype than Hope," Winter 2006.)

But if the children are testing so spectacularly well while using the progressive reading and math programs that the chancellor has imposed top-down, why would a success-minded administration suddenly want to allow school principals to abandon those programs—in other words, to go back to a "baffling profusion of approaches to teaching the three Rs throughout the city"?

It's understandable that the city's education reporters get frustrated in covering an education administration so skilled at spin. Still, it should not be that hard for them to put two and two together: despite the administration's claims of historic gains in student test scores, there's a lot of disquiet and thrashing about going on behind the Tweed Courthouse's closed doors.

Stay tuned for more reorganization of the reorganization. *—Sol Stern*

Fixing the CDBG

President Bush moves to reform a bad domestic welfare program.

A product of Great Society urban aid efforts, the Community Development Block Grant was supposed to fight poverty and revive blighted neighborhoods. The program soon proved a wasteful mess, however (see "America's Worst Domestic Program," Spring 2005). The money it has lavished on poor neighborhoods has had little impact, because nothing in the funding formula requires grantees to show that they're actually improving things. Few ever "graduate" from the program, having achieved their mission. Instead, the funding spigot stays open, year after year.

Buffalo officials, for instance, have squandered over $550 million in block-grant money over the last three decades on programs run by local politicians' relatives, friends, and supporters, or on unrealistic schemes, like a downtown cultural center unlikely to flourish in America's poorest city. The effect on poverty: nil.

Worse, after politicians representing wealthy communities grumbled in the late 1970s that they weren't getting any of the CDBG pie, Congress cynically expanded eligibility so that almost every community now qualifies for the dough. CDBG dollars—often allocated through "earmarks," the pork that Congress inserts into spending bills outside of the traditional funding process—have poured into some of America's plushest communities, bankrolling everything from tennis courts to historical renovations. Such projects, needless to say, have zilch to do with eliminating urban poverty. The program has become fraud-plagued: since 2004, HUD has indicted 159 people on charges of false claims, bribery, fraudulent contracts, theft or embezzlement, and corruption in association with CDBG.

Now, however, the Bush administration wants to put an end to all this with the 2006 CDBG Reform Act, sent to Congress in May by HUD secretary Alphonso Jackson. By setting a minimum grant of $518,000, the bill would end thousands of smaller grants to tiny, mostly suburban communities with no need for the money, thus ensuring that program funds go to poor neighborhoods. Further, the act would require recipients to submit plans with practical antipoverty objectives that they must meet to keep getting funded.

As sensible as these reforms sound, the bill's passage is a long shot, precisely because Congress has so corrupted the CDBG program. Republicans and Democrats alike—from rich, poor, and middle-income districts—protect it because it lets them bring home the bacon. The pols take the bow when hometown newspapers herald the latest CDBG-funded senior-citizen center or Main Street restoration project. And, of course, initiatives to overhaul the CDBG program often prompt hostile stories (fed by congressional delegations) about how much money a community stands to lose. A *Baltimore Sun* headline on the Bush administration's new reform is typical: COMMUNITY BLOCK GRANT CHANGE MEANS LESS FOR CITY.

But with public anger growing about Washington spending, the CDBG reform bill is timely. Republicans could lose Congress in November, partly because GOP leaders have liberally lavished federal pork, undercutting the notion that they're the party of small, effective government. A good first step to restoring the faith of GOP voters would be for Republican lawmakers to support the president's reform. *—Steven Malanga*

Soccer Louts

And the European culture that nurtures them

For old-fashioned hypocrisy, no one beats Europe's anti-American elites. Always quick with a pejorative, they regularly denounce the New World's "cowboy capitalism," revile President Bush as a trigger-happy criminal and career liar, and, as the late Jean-François Revel notes, tell anyone who will listen that "everywhere you go in the U.S., violence reigns with uniquely high levels of delinquency and criminality. . . . [T]he nation is a lawless jungle."

Soundings

Alas for their side, the violent nature of their own societies is getting hard to hide. This spring's World Cup soccer matches featured fights in Dortmund, Germany. The participants: fans of the host nation's team versus some visiting Poles who wanted to cheer on *their* guys (and incidentally do a little damage to people and property).

Clashes between fans were no joke. Some proved so horrific that riot police had to seal off Dortmund's central square. To restore order, the authorities ordered a preemptive operation to arrest "violent hooligans in the city center," including some 60 Polish troublemakers. (Preemption is okay with Euro officials, provided that they're the ones doing it.) Later, a brawl erupted between fans of the British and German teams. Result: 400 Brits and 14 citizens of Deutschland arrested.

Soccer violence is nothing new. During the 1988 World Cup, German fans beat a French cop nearly to death. In 2000, fans of Turkey's team killed two Leeds United supporters. Currently, reports the BBC, "where the phenomenon is at its worst—in the U.K., Germany, Belgium, Holland, and Italy—about 10 percent of games witness 'serious incidents,' according to researchers."

Collectors of wrought irony have noted that a preponderance of such lumpen fans have long lived off public largesse. Living in housing projects, on the dole, rudderless, and full of numb hostility, they are the sort F. A. Hayek foresaw in *The Road to Serfdom*. There, Hayek warned of states that, in the name of compassion, wanted to usurp control of citizens' lives and fortunes. The resultant cradle-to-grave socialism would produce people without personal responsibility. Why should they bother with the consequences of their actions? Nanny (aka the government) would clean up the mess.

Granted, the U.S. is hardly free of unsportsmanlike conduct. The NBA has a long list of athletes who father illegitimate kids and then pay no attention to them, except for court-mandated child support. Baseball commissioner Bud Selig recently ran a full-page letter to fans in the *New York Times*. Addressing alleged steroid use by San Francisco outfielder Barry Bonds and Arizona Diamondbacks pitcher Jason Grimsley, he wrote: "I will try to do everything I can to keep up with or even stay ahead of those who break the law and break our rules." Some pro football players are notorious for late hits on the field and for physical abuse of women and children off the field.

But deplorable as it is, this kind of aggressive deportment largely confines itself to the ranks of overpaid, overprotected athletes. Though their fans can be raucous and disorderly, they seem objects of refinement compared with the thugs who regularly despoil Europe's soccer matches.

Danger lurks, however; thus Selig's statement is an ad in the right direction. The correctives lie with the leaders, owners, sponsors, managers, and team captains who need to set positive examples. The worst thing they could do is to look to the Old World for instances of good behavior. It's not just the double-digit unemployment and Muslim and antigovernment riots that mar today's Europe. The conduct of its accusatory leaders and its ordinary citizens is also blameworthy. They have yet to learn that anti-Americanism and "do-as-I-say, not-as-I-do" statements don't make a policy—and that Europe's decline is no game.

—*Stefan Kanfer*

Crime and Indulgence

In today's Britain, only the lawful fear the law.

In Britain, we once prided ourselves—rightly—on our unarmed police force. The police were the servants of the law-abiding citizenry, nothing more and nothing less.

Recently, though, the police have become more militarized in manner and appearance. Increasingly, they look like an occupying army, festooned with the paraphernalia of repression. This is not to say that they are effective in suppressing crime, however. On the contrary: the more aggressive they look, and the more bullying they become, the less effective they grow.

I went to court the other day to give evidence in a criminal case. The courthouse crawled with policemen in bulletproof vests, toting submachine guns. I found this more menacing than reassuring, especially as the police recently have a record of shooting the wrong people.

I watched as the accused entered the dock. Another sign of the times: bulletproof glass protects the dock—and necessarily so. A man sitting next to me, whose physiognomy and deportment proclaimed him a member of the criminal classes, began to utter threats against the accused.

"When you get out, I'm fucking coming to fucking get you, you cunt," he said, perfectly audible to the people in the court. He repeated the threat several times, and stared menacingly at the accused. The accused, who was mentally subnormal, turned away in fright.

Although it was not necessary, since everyone had heard what the man next to me had said, I drew the attention of court officials to his threatening activities. The officials did nothing, apart from the court clerk telling the man to desist, which he did—but only when, a little later, the judge entered. I subsequently became the object of his menacing regard.

That he had committed a crime in the very heart of the criminal-justice system, in front of many credible witnesses who could testify against him, and that no punishment followed, emblematized the paralysis into which not just the criminal-justice system but the entire public administration of Britain has fallen. Outside the courtroom door, police patrolled with submachine guns directed at a notional threat; inside, a man committed a common crime with complete impunity. It was almost as if the policemen were protecting him rather than the law-abiding public.

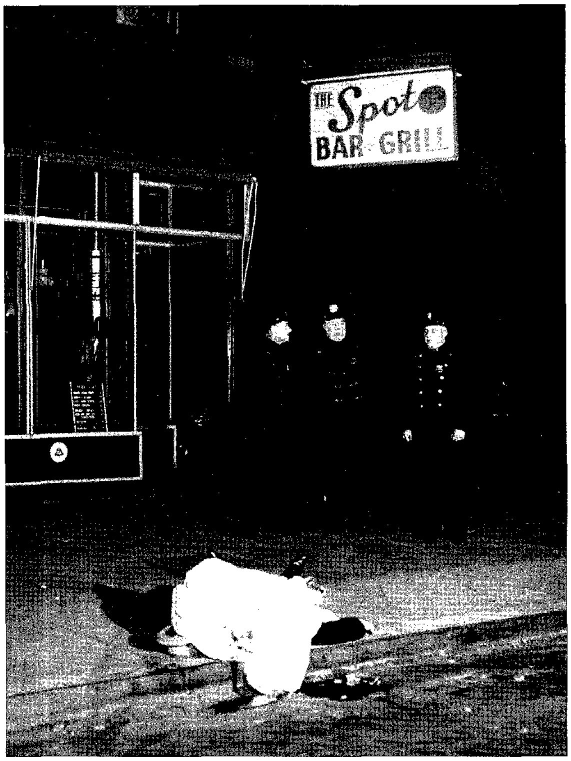
It is easy to imagine the emboldening effect of the man's court experience. What fear need he have of a system too feeble even to demand obedience within its supposedly hallowed portals? I, on the other hand, had to look around as I left the court, in case he should be loitering with intent. Only the peaceful and law-abiding fear the law in Britain today.

—Theodore Dalrymple

Stop Storm Dallying

Unprepared Long Island risks serious hurricane damage.

Long Islanders aren't prepared for hurricanes—and they should be. True, Long Island isn't New Orleans. While it juts out in the potential path of vicious Atlantic storms, chances are slim that one would deluge most of its 2.8 million residents with Katrina-style flooding, because the island's "spine" is mostly along high ground, says National Weather Service meteorologist Mike Wiley.



Even so, parts of Long Island do resemble the Mississippi coast, where nearly 400,000 residents saw their homes razed or damaged by last year's hurricane. Tens of thousands of eastern Long Islanders live in vulnerable coastal areas, where a major hurricane would trigger home-destroying storm surges. Even inland, such a storm would cause miles of wind damage, requiring billions of dollars in repairs and leaving many homes uninhabitable for weeks or months.

Sooner or later, a big storm will hit. The current generation of Long Islanders, notes Wiley, has grown up in a placid weather cycle, thanks to cool ocean temperatures. But the oceans have been warming now for several years, fueling more intense storms. The Category-3 hurricane that slammed into the island in 1938 preceded an earlier warming cycle; five storms, ranging from mild to moderate intensity, hit the island from the fifties through 1960. It's only a matter of time before one finds the path again up the coast—and these days, due to erosion and building, the island now has fewer natural barriers, such as sand dunes, to shield it.

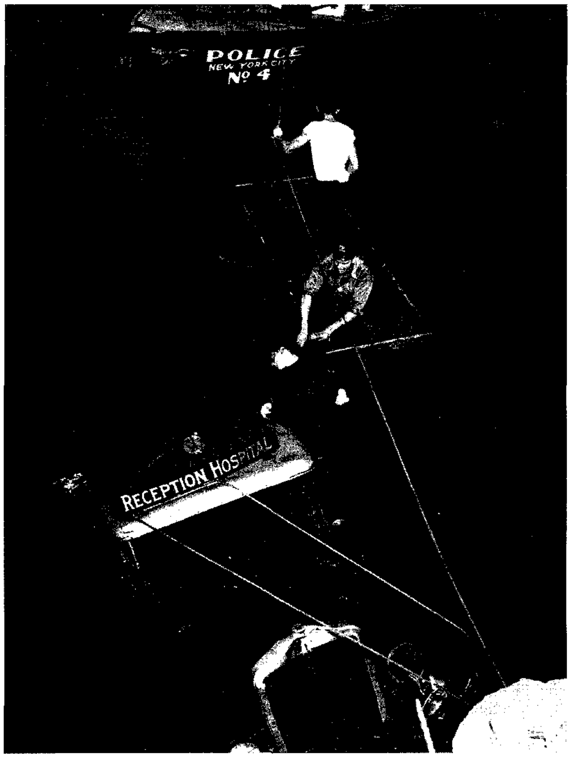
Given the island's history and geography, coastal dwellers have no excuse for lack of preparation. But unprepared they are. Fewer than half of the nearly 40,000 residents of vulnerable Long Beach carry federal flood insurance, necessary to rebuild water-damaged homes after a storm. Middle-class Freeport, where 40,000 people live, has flood-insurance coverage of only 20 percent, while tony Southampton has a coverage rate of 16 percent, the *Wall Street Journal* reports.

The East End boasts lots of multimillion-dollar second homes, and many coastal residents have the resources to repair and rebuild. But many don't: in coastal Long Beach, for instance, the average home is worth under $300,000.

New York State insurance commissioner Howard Mills has ranged all over Long Island recently, explaining to such homeowners what they must do, including checking insurance policies and, above all, urging them to buy the (inexpensive) federal flood insurance. But "there's no indication that people are buying," he tells me. Part of the complacency is human nature: people simply don't think bad things will happen to them.

But there's another reason: "It's hard to convince [homeowners] that they need insurance when they see the government will bail them out." The federal flood insurance itself, offering people coverage that the private market refuses to support, already encourages people to make unwise choices to live in vulnerable areas. But now, seeing what happened with Katrina, people will figure—correctly or incorrectly—that if a disaster is big enough, the feds will give them money anyway.

Mills, at least, deserves kudos for trying to emphasize that people are still responsible for themselves. And he also deserves credit for not attacking insurance companies, as some major insurers, citing heavily concentrated risk, jack up prices or pull back from offering even wind coverage on parts of Long Island. Mills simply notes that "the free market has dealt with the risk of catastrophe" in New York "very well" and that insurers, since they require homeowners to take elementary steps to protect their property, may actually reduce potential storm damage.



The federal flood insurance needs reform, Mills thinks, but until that happens, vulnerable Long Islanders should buy it and provide some protection for themselves.

—*Nicole Gelinas*

Blame Israel Always

Why are Western journalists so credulous of Palestinian sources?

No one knows exactly how seven members of the Ghalia family died June 9 on a Gaza Strip beach. There are no impartial observers in the area. Since last year's Israeli withdrawal and Hamas's recent electoral victory, Western media rely almost entirely—and with surprising gullibility—on Palestinian sources for information.

Here's how the Palestinian version of the story goes. Unsuspecting Palestinian families were picnicking on al-Sudaniya beach on a Friday afternoon, the Muslim Sabbath. Suddenly, an Israeli gunboat started shelling the beach. Before the panic-stricken victims could escape, a shell landed right in the middle of the Ghalia family picnic, instantly killing the father, one of his wives, and five of his children, including a baby and a toddler, and injuring others present.

Eleven-year-old Huda Ghalia was in the water when the shell hit. A camera captured her as she ran across the sand and found the carnage. Her tears rent the heart, and her message was surprisingly articulate: she called for the world in general, and Muslims especially, to witness the evil that Israelis had done.

While Hamas shouted that the Israeli gunboat had deliberately aimed at the hapless family, Western media outlets toned the charges down a notch: it was an accident, but a vicious one that never would have happened if the evil Israelis were not blasting at a public beach.

Hamas announced that it would break a 16-month "truce" and launch an all-out offensive against the Zionist enemy. Palestinian Authority president Mahmoud Abbas joined in, and UN secretary general Kofi Annan added his outrage to the flood of hatred whipped up in the wake of Huda's tears.

Two days after the incident, though, ample information, leaked to and posted on reputable websites, suggested that the Palestinian-supplied video "proving" Israel's responsibility for the deaths and injuries had been manipulated—a shot of an Israeli Defense Forces gunboat, filmed earlier that day, spliced in to give the impression that it was firing directly at the beach, the scene of Huda finding her father's body apparently staged. Data on the six shells fired from an Israeli gunboat that afternoon showed that the soldiers had aimed at a Qassam rocket-launching site at least 800 feet from the sunbathers. And so on.

But even after the IDF made the results of its investigation public at a press conference at the Defense Ministry in Tel Aviv, Western journalists maintained a climate of artificial doubt—balancing, even overshadowing, the government report with a reiteration of the Hamas narrative, now dressed up in pseudoscientific trappings supplied by a Human Rights Watch "expert," Mark Garlasco.

Why is a lone investigator, working for a nongovernmental organization, more reliable than General Meir Kalifi's investigating commission? What impartial agency has verified the data presented by Human Rights Watch and its self-designated expert? Hamas has an agenda. HRW has an agenda. But what is the agenda of the free press in our own democratic countries?

Rational examination of the evidence shifts the burden of doubt to the Hamas (and HRW) version of the incident. Israeli officials have now released ample details to support their conclusions. Hospital reports testify that one of the wounded had shrapnel removed by Palestinian doctors before her transfer to an Israeli hospital—medically inexplicable treatment that might have been about getting rid of any proof that Palestinian ordnance had caused the explosion. Close scrutiny of outtakes from the original video reveals a mixture of staging and real-time filming. Interviewed by *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, the Palestinian cameraman who filmed the explosion delivers a garbled story that unravels under questioning.

All of this recalls the al-Dura affair. On September 30, 2000, the Jerusalem correspondent of the France 2 public television network, Charles Enderlin, reported the shooting of 12-year-old Mohamed al-Dura at Netzarim Crossing in the Gaza Strip, the "target of gunfire coming from the Israeli positions." The accusation triggered a wave of attacks on Jews in Israel and worldwide. The 55-second al-Dura video, "proving" Israeli guilt in that incident and featured in an Osama bin Laden recruiting tape, was also doctored, with an archived image of an Israeli soldier spliced into the Arab-Muslim version, making it look as though he was firing point-blank at the boy. Here, too, the Western media treated Palestinian sources credulously. (Fittingly, correspondent Enderlin has weighed in on the Gaza beach video, too, applying to it an absurd "two sides to every story" logic: no one can know what really happened; it's up to public opinion to decide.)

Do Western journalists think that Israel is always guilty in principle, if not in fact? If so, perhaps they should openly join ranks with the "militants" they portray as national liberators.

—Nidra Poller

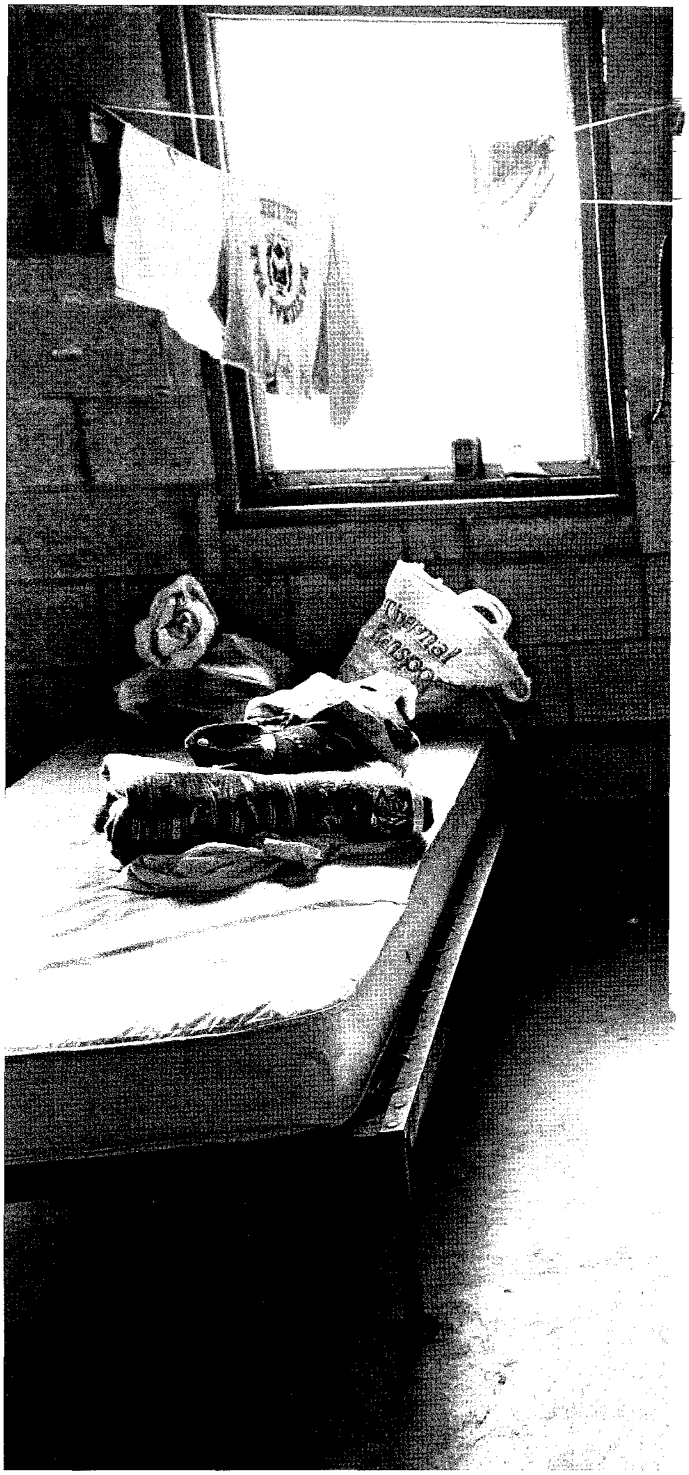
How Unskilled Immigrants Hurt Our Economy

A handful of industries get low-cost labor, and the taxpayers foot the bill.

Steven Malanga

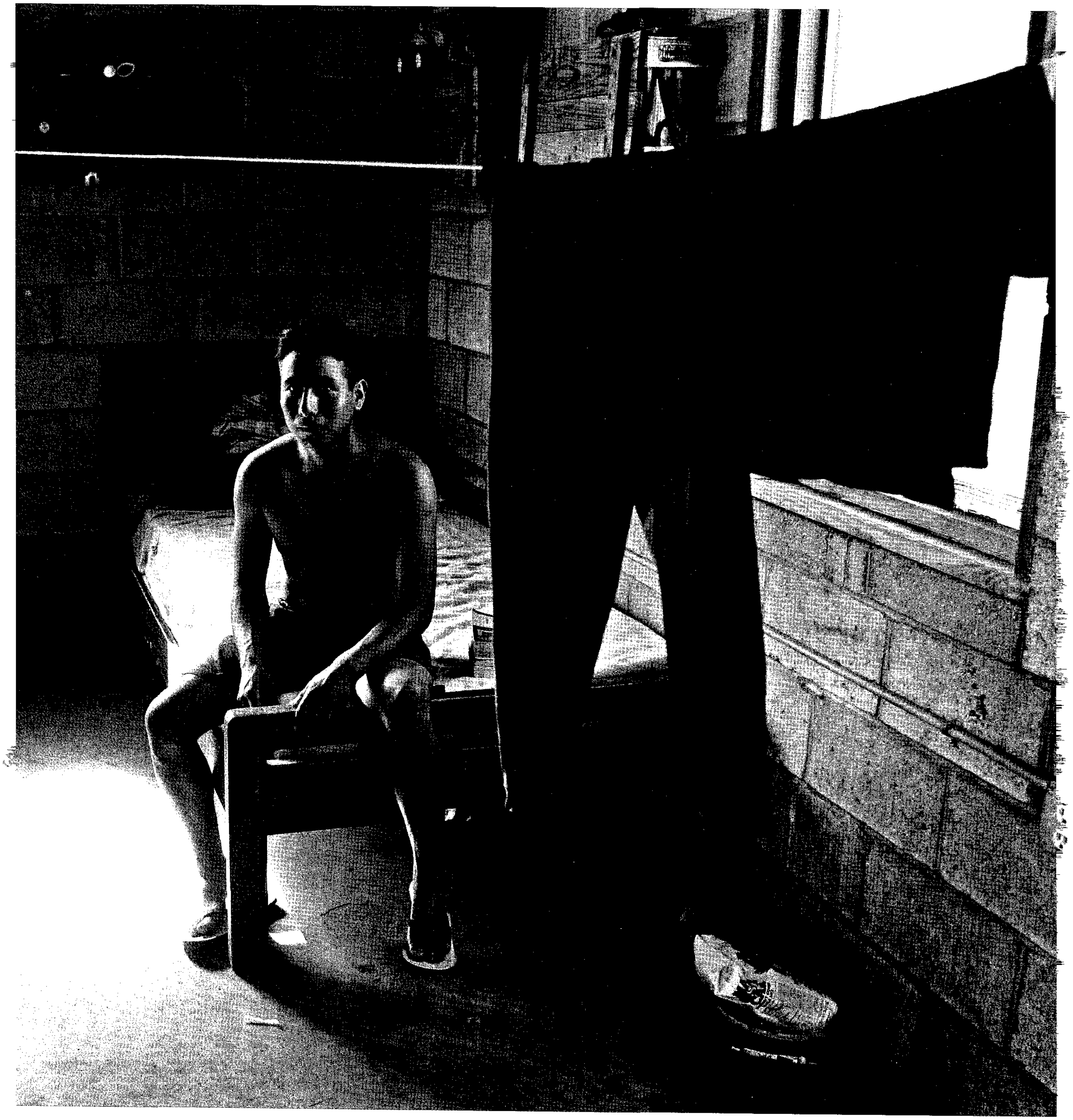
The day after Librado Velasquez arrived on Staten Island after a long, surreptitious journey from his Chiapas, Mexico, home, he headed out to a street corner to wait with other illegal immigrants looking for work. Velasquez, who had supported his wife, seven kids, and his in-laws as a *campesino*, or peasant farmer, until a 1998 hurricane devastated his farm, eventually got work, off the books, loading trucks at a small New Jersey factory, which hired illegals for jobs that required few special skills. The arrangement suited both, until a work injury sent Velasquez to the local emergency room, where federal law required that he be treated, though he could not afford to pay for his care. After five operations, he is now permanently disabled and has remained in the United States to pursue compensation claims.

"I do not have the use of my leg without walking with a cane, and I do not have strength in my arm in order to lift things," Velasquez said through an interpreter at New York City Council hearings. "I have no other way to live except if I receive some other type



ANDREW LICHTENSTEIN/CORBIS

Despite the benefits of low-cost farmworkers, like this illegal Mexican in North Carolina, . . .



of compensation. I need help, and I thought maybe my son could come and work here and support me here in the United States."

Velasquez's story illustrates some of the fault lines in the nation's current, highly charged, debate on immigration. Since the mid-1960s, America has welcomed nearly 30 million legal immigrants and received perhaps another 15 million illegals, numbers unprecedented in our history. These immigrants have picked our fruit, cleaned our homes, cut our grass, worked in our factories, and washed our cars. But they have also crowded into our hospital emergency rooms, schools, and government-subsidized aid programs, sparking a fierce debate about their contributions to our society and the costs they impose on it.

Advocates of open immigration argue that welcoming the Librado Velasquezes of the world is essential for our American economy: our businesses need workers like him, because we have a shortage of people willing to do low-wage work. Moreover, the free movement of labor in a global economy pays off for the United States, because immigrants bring skills and capital that expand our economy and offset immigration's costs. Like tax cuts, supporters argue, immigration pays for itself.

But the tale of Librado Velasquez helps show why supporters are wrong about today's immigration, as many Americans sense and so much research has demonstrated. America does not have a vast labor shortage that requires waves of low-wage immigrants to alleviate; in fact, unemployment among unskilled workers is high—about 30 percent. Moreover, many of the unskilled, uneducated workers now journeying here labor, like Velasquez, in shrinking industries, where they force out native workers, and many others work in industries where the availability of cheap workers has led businesses to suspend investment in new technologies that would make them less labor-intensive.

Yet while these workers add little to our economy, they come at great cost, because they are not economic abstractions but human beings, with their own culture and ideas—often at odds with our own. Increasing numbers of them arrive with little education and none of the skills necessary to succeed in a modern economy. Many may wind up stuck on our lowest economic rungs, where they will rely on something that immigrants of other generations didn't have: a vast U.S. welfare and social-services apparatus that has enormously amplified the *cost* of immigration. Just as welfare reform and other policies are helping to shrink America's underclass by weaning people off such social programs, we are importing a new, foreign-born underclass. As famed free-market economist Milton Friedman puts it: "It's just obvious that you can't have free immigration and a welfare state."

Immigration can only pay off again for America if we reshape our policy, organizing it around what's good for the economy by welcoming workers we truly need and excluding those who, because they have so little to offer, are likely to cost us more than they contribute, and who will struggle for years to find their place here.

Hampering today's immigration debate are our misconceptions about the so-called first great migration some 100 years ago, with which today's immigration is often compared. We envision that first great migration as a time when multitudes of Emma Lazarus's "tired," "poor," and "wretched refuse" of Europe's shores made their way from destitution to American opportunity. Subsequent studies of American immigration with titles like *The Uprooted* convey the same impression of the dispossessed and displaced swarming here to find a new life. If America could assimilate 24 million mostly desperate immigrants from that great migration—people one unsympathetic economist at the turn of the twentieth century described as "the unlucky, the thriftless, the worthless"—surely, so the story goes, today's much bigger and richer country can absorb the millions of Librado Velasquezes now venturing here.

But that argument distorts the realities of the first great migration. Though fleeing persecution or economic stagnation in their homelands, that era's immigrants—Jewish tailors and seamstresses who helped create New York's garment industry, Italian stonemasons and bricklayers who helped build some of our greatest buildings, German merchants, shopkeepers, and artisans—all brought important skills with them that fit easily into the American economy. Those waves of immigrants—many of them urban dwellers who crossed a continent and an ocean to get here—helped supercharge the workforce at a time when the country was going through a transformative economic expansion that craved new workers, especially in its cities. A 1998 National Research Council report noted "that the newly arriving immigrant nonagricultural work force . . . was (slightly) more skilled than the resident American labor force": 27 percent of them were skilled laborers, compared with only 17 percent of that era's native-born workforce.

Many of these immigrants quickly found a place in our economy, participating in the workforce at a higher rate even than the native population. Their success at finding work sent many of them quickly up the economic ladder: those who stayed in America for at least 15 years, for instance, were just as likely to own their own business as native-born workers of the same age, one study found. Another study found that their American-born children were just as likely to be accountants, engineers, or lawyers as Americans whose families had been here for generations.

What the newcomers of the great migration did not find here was a vast social-services and welfare state. They had to rely on their own resources or those of friends, relatives, or private, often ethnic, charities if things did not go well. That's why about 70 percent of those who came were men in their prime. It's also why many of them left when the economy sputtered several times during the period. For though one often hears that restrictive anti-immigration legislation starting with the Emergency Quota Act of 1921 ended the first great migration, what really killed it was the crash of the American economy. Even with the 1920s quotas, America welcomed some 4.1 million immigrants, but in the Depression of the 1930s, the number of foreign immigrants tumbled far below quota levels, to 500,000. With America's streets no longer paved with gold, and without access to the New Deal programs for native-born Americans, immigrants not only stopped coming, but some 60 percent of those already here left in a great remigration home.

"Many of the unskilled, uneducated workers now journeying here labor in shrinking industries."

Today's immigration has turned out so differently in part because it emerged out of the 1960s civil rights and Great Society mentality. In 1965, a new immigration act eliminated the old system of national quotas, which critics saw as racist because it greatly favored European nations. Lawmakers created a set of broader immigration quotas for each hemisphere, and they added a new visa preference category for family members to join their relatives here. Senate immigration subcommittee chairman Edward Kennedy reassured the country that, "contrary to the charges in some quarters, [the bill] will not inundate America with immigrants," and "it will not cause American workers to lose their jobs."

But, in fact, the law had an immediate, dramatic effect, increasing immigration by 60 percent in its first ten years. Sojourners from poorer countries around the rest of the world arrived in ever-greater numbers, so that whereas half of immigrants in the 1950s had originated from Europe, 75 percent by the 1970s were from Asia and Latin America. And as the influx of immigrants grew, the special-preferences rule for family unification intensified it further, as the pool of eligible family members around the world also increased. Legal immigration to the U.S. soared from 2.5 million in the 1950s to 4.5 million in the 1970s to 7.3 million in the 1980s to about 10 million in the 1990s.

As the floodgates of legal immigration opened, the widening economic gap between the United States and many of its neighbors also pushed illegal immigration to levels that America had never seen. In particular, when Mexico's move to a more centralized, state-run economy in the 1970s produced hyperinflation, the disparity between its stagnant economy and U.S. prosperity yawned wide. Mexico's per-capita gross domestic product, 37 percent of the United States' in the early 1980s, was only 27 percent of it by the end of the decade—and is now just 25 percent of it. With Mexican farmworkers able to earn seven to ten times as much in the United States as at home, by the 1980s illegals were pouring across our border at the rate of about 225,000 a year, and U.S. sentiment rose for slowing the flow.

> **"The flow of illegals into the country rose to between 300,000 and 500,000 per year in the 1990s."**

But an unusual coalition of business groups, unions, civil rights activists, and church leaders thwarted the call for restrictions with passage of the inaptly named 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act, which legalized some 2.7 million unauthorized aliens already here, supposedly in exchange for tougher penalties and controls against employers who hired illegals. The law proved no deterrent, however, because supporters, in subsequent legislation and court cases argued on civil rights grounds, weakened the employer sanctions. Meanwhile, more illegals flooded here in the hope of future amnesties from Congress, while the newly legalized sneaked their wives and children into the country rather than have them wait for family-preference visas. The flow of illegals into the country rose to between 300,000 and 500,000 per year in the 1990s, so that a decade after the legislation that had supposedly solved the undocumented alien problem by reclassifying them as legal, the number of illegals living in the United States was back up to about 5 million, while today it's estimated at between 9 million and 13 million.

. . . U.S. growers, like this one in Florida, are having to mechanize to compete with even cheaper foreign imports.

ROBERT SULLIVAN/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

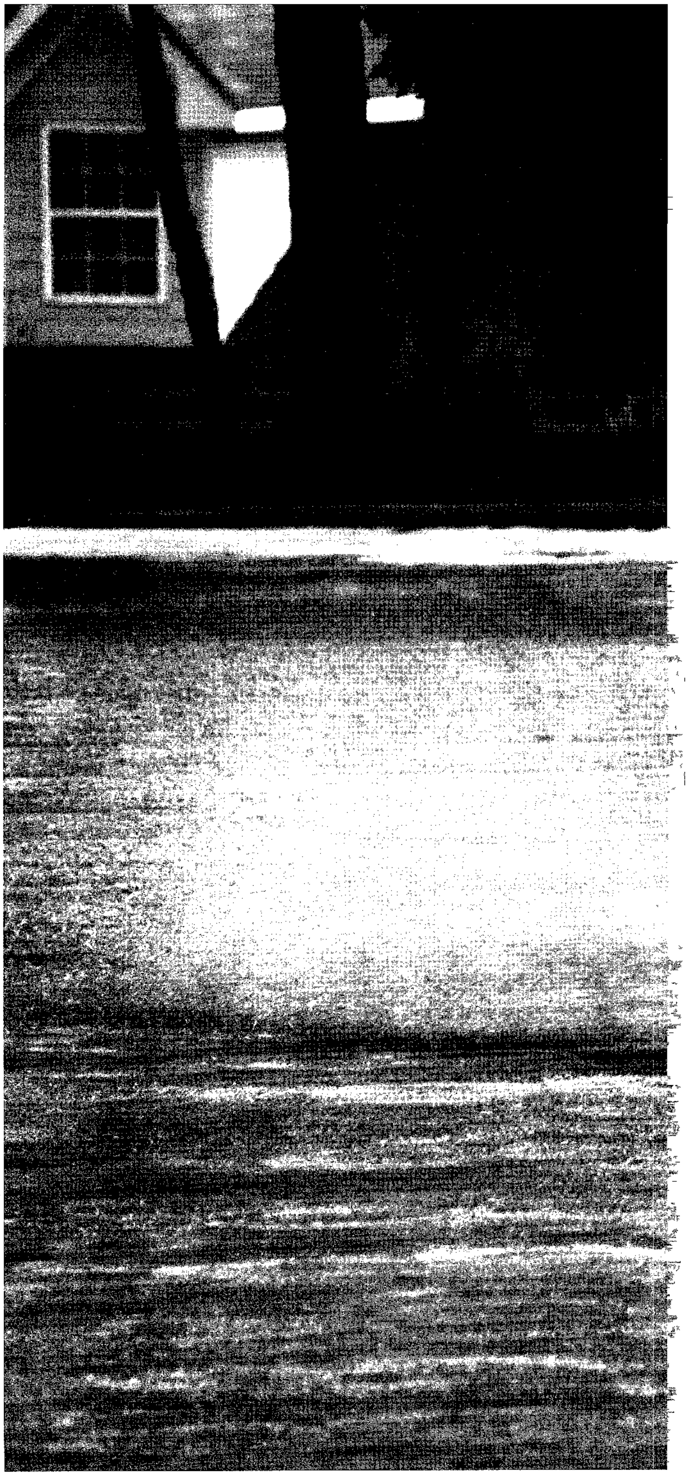
The flood of immigrants, both legal and illegal, from countries with poor, ill-educated populations, has yielded a mismatch between today's immigrants and the American economy and has left many workers poorly positioned to succeed for the long term. Unlike the immigrants of 100 years ago, whose skills reflected or surpassed those of the native workforce at the time, many of today's arrivals, particularly the more than half who now come from Central and South America, are farmworkers in their home countries who come here with little education or even basic training in blue-collar occupations like carpentry or machinery. (A century ago, farmworkers made up 35 percent of the U.S. labor force, compared with the under 2 percent who produce a surplus of food today.) Nearly two-thirds of Mexican immigrants, for instance, are high school dropouts, and most wind up doing either unskilled factory work or small-scale construction projects, or they work in service industries, where they compete for entry-level jobs against one another, against the adult children of other immigrants, and against native-born high school dropouts. Of the 15 industries employing the greatest percentage of foreign-born workers, half are low-wage service industries, including gardening, domestic household work, car washes, shoe repair, and janitorial work. To take one stark example: whereas 100 years ago, immigrants were half as likely as native-born workers to be employed in household service, today immigrants account for 27 percent of all domestic workers in the United States.

Although open-borders advocates say that these workers are simply taking jobs Americans don't want, studies show that the immigrants drive down wages of native-born workers and squeeze them out of certain industries. Harvard economists George Borjas and Lawrence Katz, for instance, estimate that low-wage immigration cuts the wages for the average native-born high school dropout by some 8 percent, or more than $1,200 a year. Other economists find that the new workers also push down wages significantly for immigrants already here and native-born Hispanics.

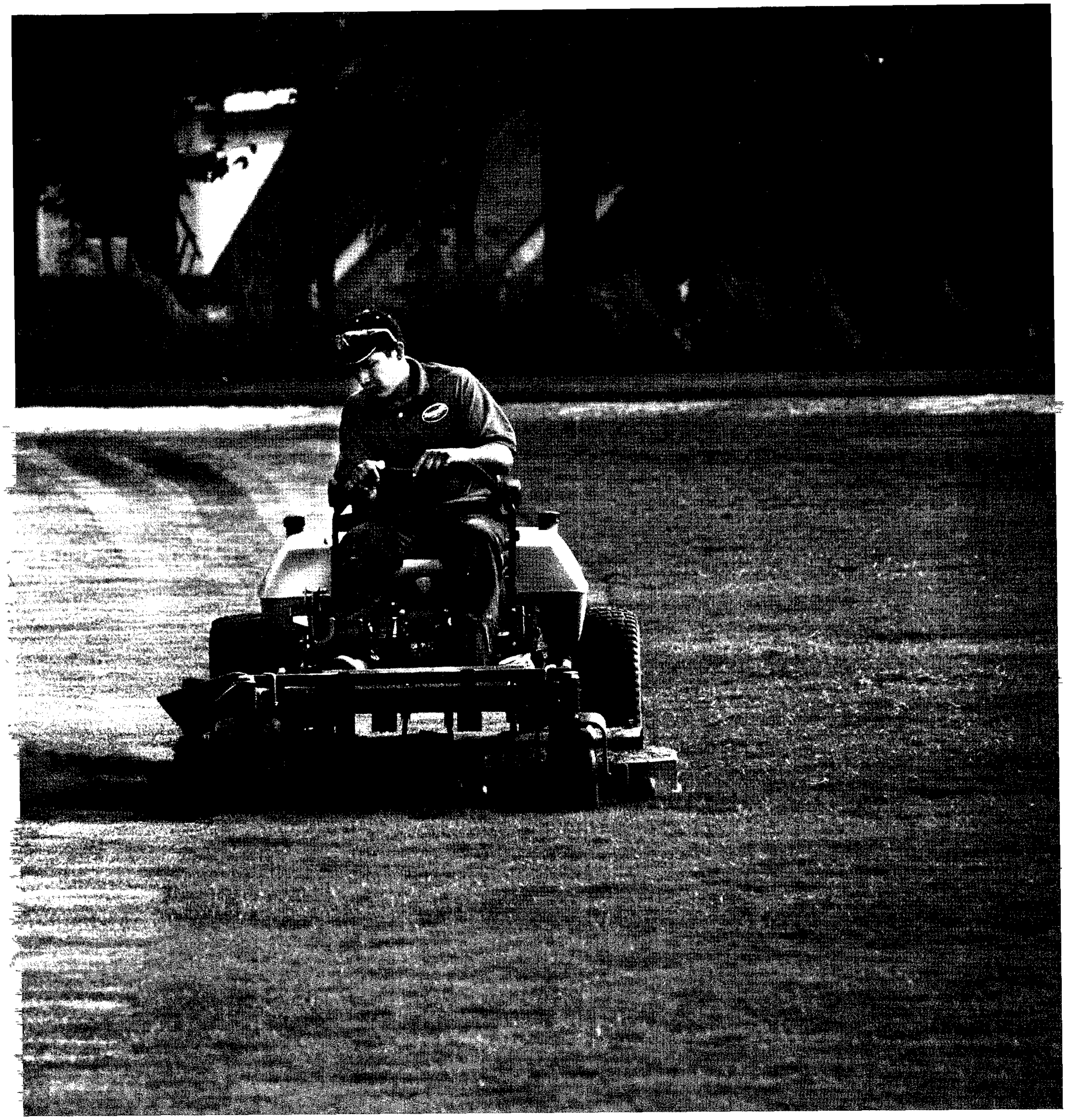
Consequently, as the waves of immigration continue, the sheer number of those competing for low-skilled service jobs makes economic progress difficult. A study of the impact of immigration on New York City's restaurant business, for instance, found that 60 percent of immigrant workers do not receive regular raises, while 70 percent had never been promoted. One Mexican dishwasher aptly captured the downward pressure that all these arriving workers put on wages by telling the study's authors about his frustrating search for a 50-cent raise after working for $6.50 an hour: "I visited a few restaurants asking for $7 an hour, but they only offered me $5.50 or $6," he said. "I had to beg [for a job]."

Similarly, immigration is also pushing some native-born workers out of jobs, as Kenyon College economists showed in the California nail-salon workforce. Over a 16-year period starting in the late 1980s, some 35,600 mostly Vietnamese immigrant women flooded into the industry, a mass migration that equaled the total number of jobs in the industry before the immigrants arrived. Though the new workers created a labor surplus that led to lower prices, new services, and somewhat more demand, the economists estimate that as a result, 10,000 native-born workers either left the industry or never bothered entering it.

In many American industries, waves of low-wage workers have also retarded investments that might lead to modernization and efficiency. Farming, which employs a million


ROBERT W. GINN/PHOTOEDIT, INC.

Homeowners and landlords like hiring cheap immigrant workers to do menial jobs . . .



immigrant laborers in California alone, is the prime case in point. Faced with a labor shortage in the early 1960s, when President Kennedy ended a 22-year-old guest-worker program that allowed 45,000 Mexican farmhands to cross over the border and harvest 2.2 million tons of California tomatoes for processed foods, farmers complained but swiftly automated, adopting a mechanical tomato-picking technology created more than a decade earlier. Today, just 5,000 better-paid workers—one-ninth the original workforce—harvest 12 million tons of tomatoes using the machines.

The savings prompted by low-wage migrants may even be minimal in crops not easily mechanized. Agricultural economists Wallace Huffman and Alan McCunn of Iowa State University have estimated that without illegal workers, the retail cost of fresh produce would increase only about 3 percent in the summer-fall season and less than 2 percent in the winter-spring season, because labor represents only a tiny percent of the retail price of produce and because without migrant workers, America would probably import more foreign fruits and vegetables. "The question is whether we want to import more produce from abroad, or more workers from abroad to pick our produce," Huffman remarks.

For American farmers, the answer has been to keep importing workers—which has now made the farmers more vulnerable to foreign competition, since even minimum-wage immigrant workers can't compete with produce picked on farms in China, Chile, or Turkey and shipped here cheaply. A flood of low-priced Turkish raisins several years ago produced a glut in the United States that sharply drove down prices and knocked some farms out of business, shrinking total acreage in California devoted to the crop by one-fifth, or some 50,000 acres. The farms that survived are now moving to mechanize swiftly, realizing that no amount of cheap immigrant labor will make them competitive.

As foreign competition and mechanization shrink manufacturing and farmworker jobs, low-skilled immigrants are likely to wind up farther on the margins of our economy, where many already operate. For example, although only about 12 percent of construction workers are foreign-born, 100,000 to 300,000 illegal immigrants have carved a place for themselves as temporary workers on the fringes of the industry. In urban areas like New York and Los Angeles, these mostly male illegal immigrants gather on street corners, in empty lots, or in Home Depot parking lots to sell their labor by the hour or the day, for $7 to $11 an hour.

That's far below what full-time construction workers earn, and for good reason. Unlike the previous generations of immigrants who built America's railroads or great infrastructure projects like New York's bridges and tunnels, these day laborers mostly do home-improvement projects. A New York study, for instance, found that four in ten employers who hire day laborers are private homeowners or renters wanting help with cleanup chores, moving, or landscaping. Another 56 percent were contractors, mostly small, nonunion shops, some owned by immigrants themselves, doing short-term, mostly residential work. The day laborer's market, in other words, has turned out to be a boon for homeowners and small contractors offering their residential clients a rock-bottom price, but a big chunk of the savings comes because low-wage immigration has produced such a labor surplus that many of these workers are willing to take jobs without benefits and with salaries far below industry norms.

Because so much of our legal and illegal immigrant labor is concentrated in such fringe, low-wage employment, its overall impact on our economy is extremely small. A 1997 National Academy of Sciences study estimated that immigration's net benefit to the American economy raises the average income of the native-born by only some $10 billion a year—about $120 per household. And that meager contribution is not the result of immigrants helping to build our essential industries or making us more competitive globally but instead merely delivering our pizzas and cutting our grass. Estimates by pro-immigration forces that foreign workers contribute much more to the economy, boosting annual gross domestic product by hundreds of billions of dollars, generally just tally what immigrants earn here, while ignoring the offsetting effect they have on the wages of native-born workers.

If the benefits of the current generation of migrants are small, the costs are large and growing because of America's vast range of social programs and the wide advocacy network that strives to hook low-earning legal and illegal immigrants into these programs. A 1998 National Academy of Sciences study found that more than 30 percent of California's foreign-born were on Medicaid—including 37 percent of all Hispanic households—compared with 14 percent of native-born households. The foreign-born were more than twice as likely as the native-born to be on welfare, and their children were nearly five times as likely to be in means-tested government lunch programs. Native-born households pay for much of this, the study found, because they earn more and pay higher taxes—and are more likely to comply with tax laws. Recent immigrants, by contrast, have much lower levels of income and tax compliance (another study estimated that only 56 percent of illegals in California have taxes deducted from their earnings, for instance). The study's conclusion: immigrant families cost each native-born household in California an additional $1,200 a year in taxes.

> **“Immigrant families cost each native-born household in California an additional $1,200 a year in taxes.”**

Immigration's bottom line has shifted so sharply that in a high-immigration state like California, native-born residents are paying up to *ten times* more in state and local taxes than immigrants generate in economic benefits. Moreover, the cost is only likely to grow as the foreign-born population—which has already mushroomed from about 9 percent of the U.S. population when the NAS studies were done in the late 1990s to about 12 percent today—keeps growing. And citizens in more and more places will feel the bite, as immigrants move beyond their traditional settling places. From 1990 to 2005, the number of states in which immigrants make up at least 5 percent of the population nearly doubled from 17 to 29, with states like Arkansas, South Dakota, South Carolina, and Georgia seeing the most growth. This sharp turnaround since the 1970s, when immigrants were less likely to be using the social programs of the Great Society than the native-born population, says Harvard economist Borjas, suggests that welfare and other social programs are a magnet drawing certain types of immigrants—nonworking women, children, and the elderly—and keeping them here when they run into difficulty.

Not only have the formal and informal networks helping immigrants tap into our social spending grown, but they also get plenty of assistance from advocacy groups financed by tax dollars, working to ensure that immigrants get their share of social spending. Thus, the Newark-based New Jersey Immigration Policy Network receives several hundred thousand government dollars annually to help doctors and hospitals increase immigrant enrollment in Jersey's subsidized health-care programs. Casa Maryland, operating in the greater Washington area, gets funding from nearly 20 federal, state, and local government agencies to run programs that “empower” immigrants to demand benefits and care from government and to “refer clients to government and private social service programs for which they and their families may be eligible.”

Pols around the country, intent on currying favor with ethnic voting blocs by appearing immigrant-friendly, have jumped on the benefits-for-immigrants bandwagon, endorsing “don't ask, don't tell” policies toward immigrants who register for benefits, giving tax dollars to centers that find immigrants work and aid illegals, and enacting legislation prohibiting local authorities from cooperating with federal immigration officials. In New York, for instance, Mayor Michael Bloomberg has ordered city agencies to ignore an immigrant's status in providing services. "This policy's critical to encourage immigrant day laborers to access . . . children's health insurance, a full range of preventive primary and acute medical care, domestic violence counseling, emergency shelters, police protection, consumer fraud protections, and protection against discrimination through the Human Rights Commission," the city's Immigrant Affairs Commissioner, Guillermo Linares, explains.

Almost certainly, immigrants' participation in our social welfare programs will increase over time, because so many are destined to struggle in our workforce. Despite our cherished view of immigrants as rapidly climbing the economic ladder, more and more of the new arrivals and their children face a lifetime of economic disadvantage, because they arrive here with low levels of education and with few work skills—shortcomings not easily overcome. Mexican immigrants, who are up to six times more likely to be high school dropouts than native-born Americans, not only earn substantially less than the native-born median, but the wage gap persists for decades after they've arrived. A study of the 2000 census data, for instance, shows that the cohort of Mexican immigrants between 25 and 34 who entered the United States in the late 1970s were earning 40 to 50 percent less than similarly aged native-born Americans in 1980, but 20 years later they had fallen even further behind their native-born counterparts. Today's Mexican immigrants between 25 and 34 have an even larger wage gap relative to the native-born population. Adjusting for other socioeconomic factors, Harvard's Borjas and Katz estimate that virtually this entire wage gap is attributable to low levels of education.

Meanwhile, because their parents start off so far behind, the American-born children of Mexican immigrants also make slow progress. First-generation adult Americans of Mexican descent studied in the 2000 census, for instance, earned 14 percent less than native-born Americans. By contrast, first-generation Portuguese Americans earned slightly *more* than the average native-born worker—a reminder of how quickly immigrants once succeeded in America and how some still do. But Mexico increasingly dominates our immigration flows, accounting for 43 percent of the growth of our foreign-born population in the 1990s.

One reason some ethnic groups make up so little ground concerns the transmission of what economists call "ethnic capital," or what we might call the influence of culture. More than previous generations, immigrants today tend to live concentrated in ethnic enclaves, and their children find their role models among their own group. Thus the children of today's Mexican immigrants are likely to live in a neighborhood where about 60 percent of men dropped out of high school and now do low-wage work, and where less than half of the population speak English fluently, which might explain why high school dropout rates among Americans of Mexican ancestry are two and a half times higher than dropout rates for all other native-born Americans, and why first-generation Mexican Americans do not move up the economic ladder nearly as quickly as the children of other immigrant groups.

In sharp contrast is the cultural capital transmitted by Asian immigrants to children growing up in predominantly Asian-American neighborhoods. More than 75 percent of Chinese immigrants and 98 percent of South Asian immigrants to the U.S. speak English fluently, while a mid-1990s study of immigrant households in California found that 37 percent of Asian immigrants were college graduates, compared with only 3.4 percent of Mexican immigrants. Thus, even an Asian-American child whose parents are high school dropouts is more likely to grow up in an environment that encourages him to stay in school and learn to speak English well, attributes that will serve him well in the job market. Not surprisingly, several studies have shown that Asian immigrants and

. . . but the benefits don't outweigh the costs to the U.S. of providing those workers with health care and educating their kids.

ROBERT BRENNER/PHOTOEDIT, INC.

their children earn substantially more than Mexican immigrants and their children.

Given these realities, several of the major immigration reforms now under consideration simply don't make economic sense—especially the guest-worker program favored by President Bush and the U.S. Senate. Careful economic research tells us that there is no significant shortfall of workers in essential American industries, desperately needing supplement from a massive guest-worker program. Those few industries now relying on cheap labor must focus more quickly on mechanization where possible. Meanwhile, the cost of paying legal workers already here a bit more to entice them to do such low-wage work as is needed will have a minimal impact on our economy.

The potential woes of a guest-worker program, moreover, far overshadow any economic benefit, given what we know about the long, troubled history of temporary-worker programs in developed countries. They have never stemmed illegal immigration, and the guest workers inevitably become permanent residents, competing with the native-born and forcing down wages. Our last guest-worker program with Mexico, begun during World War II to boost wartime manpower, grew larger in the postwar era, because employers who liked the cheap labor lobbied hard to keep it. By the mid-1950s, the number of guest workers reached seven times the annual limit during the war itself, while illegal immigration doubled, as the availability of cheap labor prompted employers to search for ever more of it rather than invest in mechanization or other productivity gains.

The economic and cultural consequences of guest-worker programs have been devastating in Europe, and we risk similar problems. When post–World War II Germany permitted its manufacturers to import workers from Turkey to man the assembly lines, industry's investment in productivity declined relative to such countries as Japan, which lacked ready access to cheap labor. When Germany finally ended the guest-worker program once it became economically unviable, most of the guest workers stayed on, having attained permanent-resident status. Since then, the descendants of these workers have been chronically underemployed and now have a crime rate double that of German youth.

France has suffered similar consequences. In the post–World War II boom, when French unemployment was under 2 percent, the country imported an industrial labor force from its colonies; by the time France's industrial jobs began evaporating in the 1980s, these guest workers and their children numbered in the millions, and most had made little economic progress. They now inhabit the vast housing projects, or *cités*, that ring Paris—and that have recently been the scene of chronic rioting. Like Germany, France thought it was importing a labor force, but it wound up introducing a new underclass.

"Importing labor is far more complicated than importing other factors of production, such as commodities," write University of California at Davis prof Philip Martin, an expert on guest-worker programs, and Michael Teitelbaum, a former member of the U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform. "Migration involves human beings, with their own beliefs, politics, cultures, languages, loves, hates, histories, and families."

If low-wage immigration doesn't pay off for the United States, legalizing illegals already here makes as little sense as importing new rounds of guest workers. The Senate and President Bush, however, aim to start two-thirds of the 11 million undocumented aliens already in the country on a path to legalization, on the grounds that only thus can America assimilate them, and only through assimilation can they hope for economic success in the United States. But such arguments ignore the already poor economic performance of increasingly large segments of the *legal* immigrant population in the United States. Merely granting illegal aliens legal status won't suddenly catapult them up our mobility ladder, because it won't give them the skills and education to compete.

At the same time, legalization will only spur new problems, as our experience with the 1986 immigration act should remind us. At the time, then-congressman Charles Schumer, who worked on the legislation, acknowledged that it was "a riverboat gamble," with no certainty that it would slow down the waves of illegals. Now, of course, we know that the legislation had the opposite effect, creating the bigger problem we now have (which hasn't stopped Senator Schumer from supporting the current legalization proposals). The legislation also swamped the Immigration and Naturalization Service with masses of fraudulent, black-market documents, so that it eventually rubber-stamped tens of thousands of dubious applications.

> **"The economic and cultural consequences of guest-worker programs have been devastating in Europe."**

If we do not legalize them, what can we do with 11 million illegals? Ship them back home? Their presence here is a fait accompli, the argument goes, and only legalization can bring them above ground, where they can assimilate. But that argument assumes that we have only two choices: to decriminalize or deport. But what happened after the first great migration suggests a third way: to end the economic incentives that keep them here. We could prompt a great remigration home if, first off, state and local governments in jurisdictions like New York and California would stop using their vast resources to aid illegal immigrants. Second, the federal government can take the tougher approach that it failed to take after the 1986 act. It can require employers to verify Social Security numbers and immigration status before hiring, so that we bar illegals from many jobs. It can deport those caught here. And it can refuse to give those who remain the same benefits as U.S. citizens. Such tough measures do work: as a recent Center for Immigration Studies report points out, when the federal government began deporting illegal Muslims after 9/11, many more illegals who knew they were likely to face more scrutiny voluntarily returned home.

If America is ever to make immigration work for our economy again, it must reject policies shaped by advocacy groups trying to turn immigration into the next civil rights cause or by a tiny minority of businesses seeking cheap labor subsidized by the taxpayers. Instead, we must look to other developed nations that have focused on luring workers who have skills that are in demand and who have the best chance of assimilating. Australia, for instance, gives preferences to workers grouped into four skilled categories: managers, professionals, associates of professionals, and skilled laborers. Using a straightforward "points calculator" to determine who gets in, Australia favors immigrants between the ages of 18 and 45 who speak English, have a post–high school degree or training in a trade, and have at least six months' work experience as everything from laboratory technicians to architects and surveyors to information-technology workers. Such an immigration policy goes far beyond America's employment-based immigration categories, like the H1-B visas, which account for about 10 percent of our legal immigration and essentially serve the needs of a few Silicon Valley industries.

Immigration reform must also tackle our family-preference visa program, which today accounts for two-thirds of all legal immigration and has helped create a 40-year waiting list. Lawmakers should narrow the family-preference visa program down to spouses and minor children of U.S. citizens and should exclude adult siblings and parents.

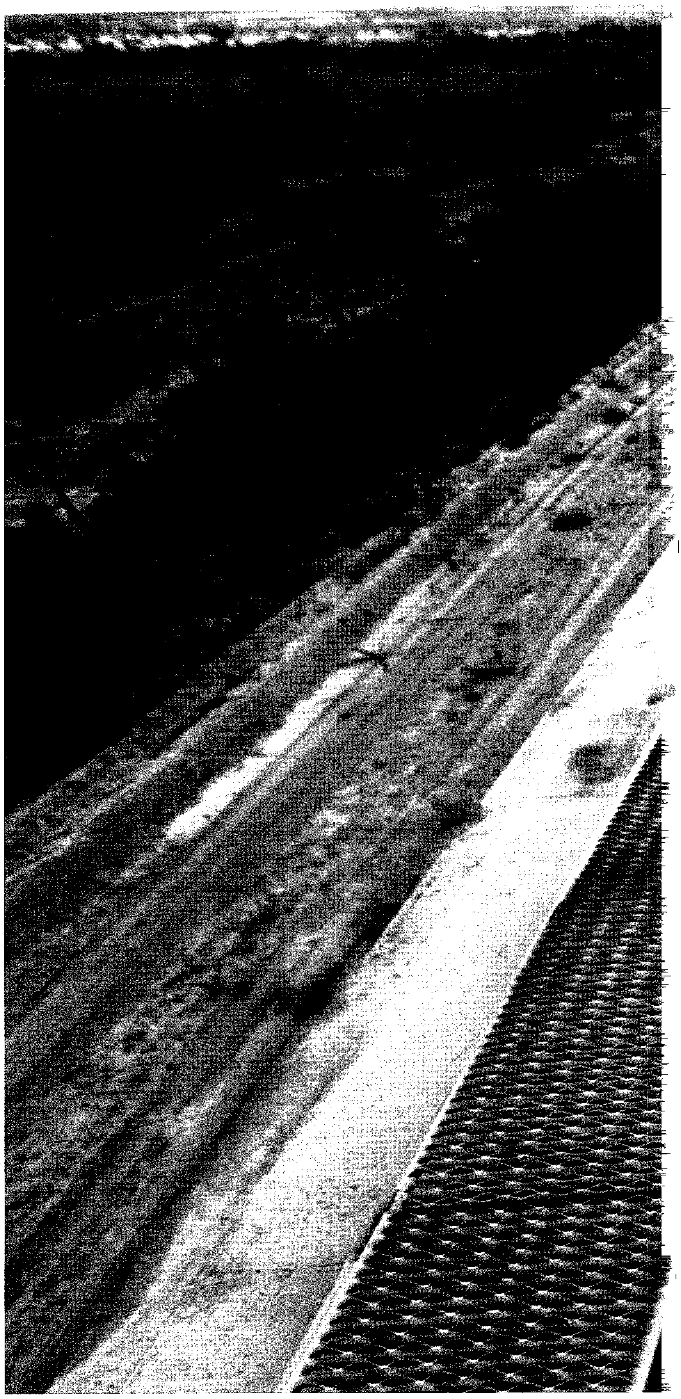
America benefits even today from many of its immigrants, from the Asian entrepreneurs who have helped revive inner-city Los Angeles business districts to Haitians and Jamaicans who have stabilized neighborhoods in Queens and Brooklyn to Indian programmers who have spurred so much innovation in places like Silicon Valley and Boston's Route 128. But increasingly over the last 25 years, such immigration has become the exception. It needs once again to become the rule.

Seeing Today's Immigrants Straight

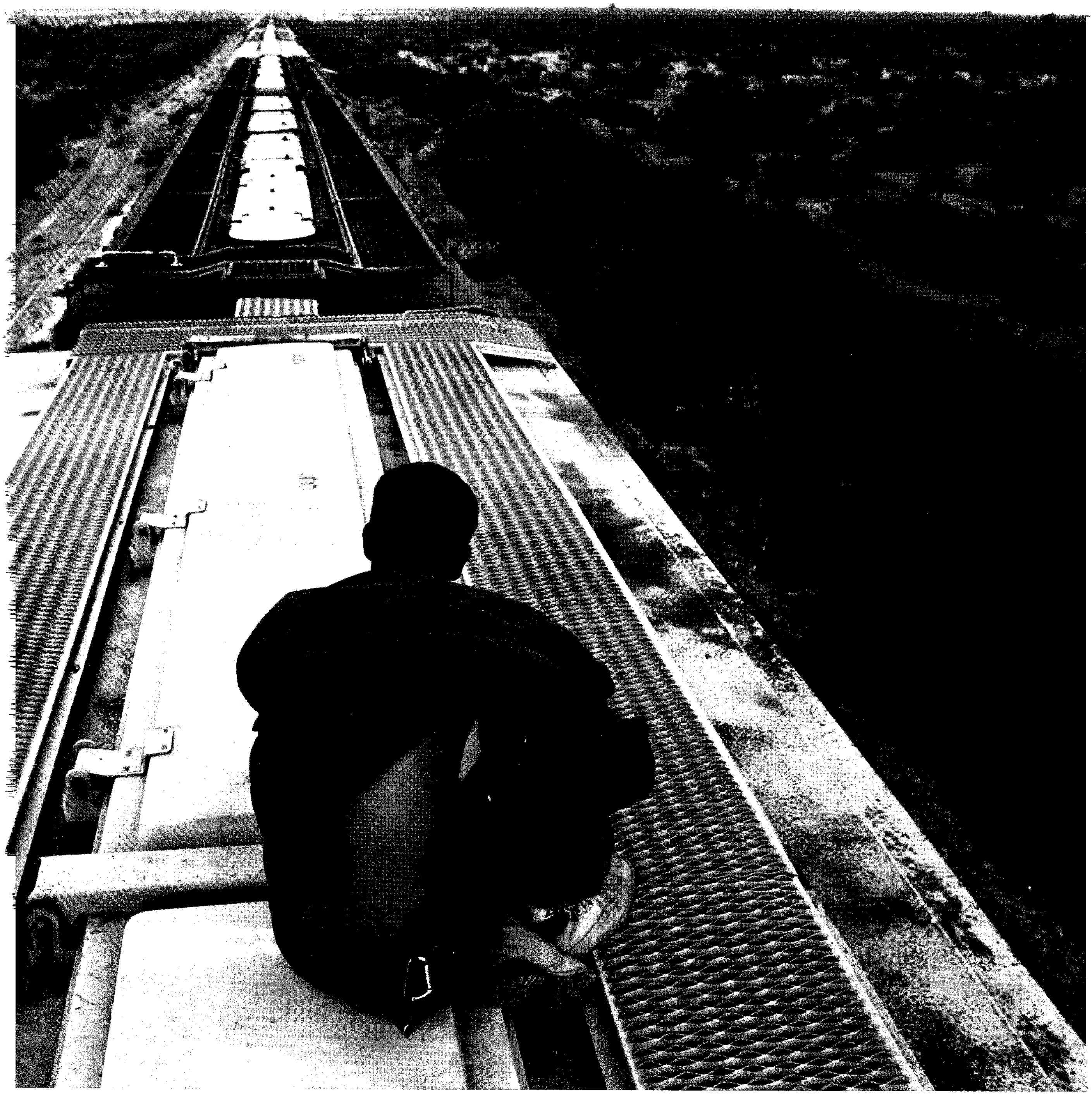
Advocates of "comprehensive immigration reform" let ideology blind them to the dispiriting facts on the ground.

Heather Mac Donald

The immigration debate has divided the conservative movement, with each side accusing the other of betraying core conservative principles. Amnesty proponents argue that America's best traditions require legalizing the 11 to 12 million illegal aliens already here and opening the door wide to would-be migrants the world over. Illegal immigration, these conservative advocates say, is the inevitable and blameless consequence of misguided laws that foolishly—and vainly—seek to prevent willing workers and labor-hungry employers from finding each other. Hispanics—the vast majority of aliens and the real center of the immigration debate—bring much-needed family values and a work ethic to the American


CARLOS BARRIA/REUTERS/CORBIS

A Mexican on his way to cross illegally into Texas



polity; refusing to grant them legal status would destroy Republican hopes for a large new voting bloc. Since popular opposition to large-scale Hispanic immigration stems from economic ignorance and nativist fear, policymakers should protect America from its own worst impulses and ignore the anti-immigration revolt.

Conservative opponents of amnesty and liberalized immigration respond that the rule of law is at stake. Rewarding large-scale lawbreaking with legal status and financial benefits will spark further violations. The mass amnesty protests of the spring were part of a growing international movement challenging national sovereignty. Conservative respect for facts should encourage skepticism toward claims of superior Hispanic values. And the conservative preference for local decision making cautions against dismissing the popular backlash against illegal immigration; it is just possible that people closest to the problem know something that Beltway insiders do not.

Vexing the debate further, the popular revolt is not just against illegal immigration but against high levels of unskilled Mexican immigration per se. As political scientist Peter Skerry observes, the public dislikes the effect on local communities of large numbers of poor Mexicans and their progeny, legal or not. Some of the effects, such as crime, worsen dramatically from the first to the second generation of Mexicans, who not only are legal but are American citizens.

Since criticizing illegal immigration often draws charges of racism, few relish going further and challenging the wisdom of our current immigration flows, legal or not. Yet unless we accurately diagnose the immigration problem, any legislative fix that merely converts the current illegal flow to a legal one will fail both as policy and as politics.

Herewith—in an effort to sharpen the internal debate—are the conservative principles that militate against amnesty, for immigration-law enforcement, and for a radical change in immigration priorities.

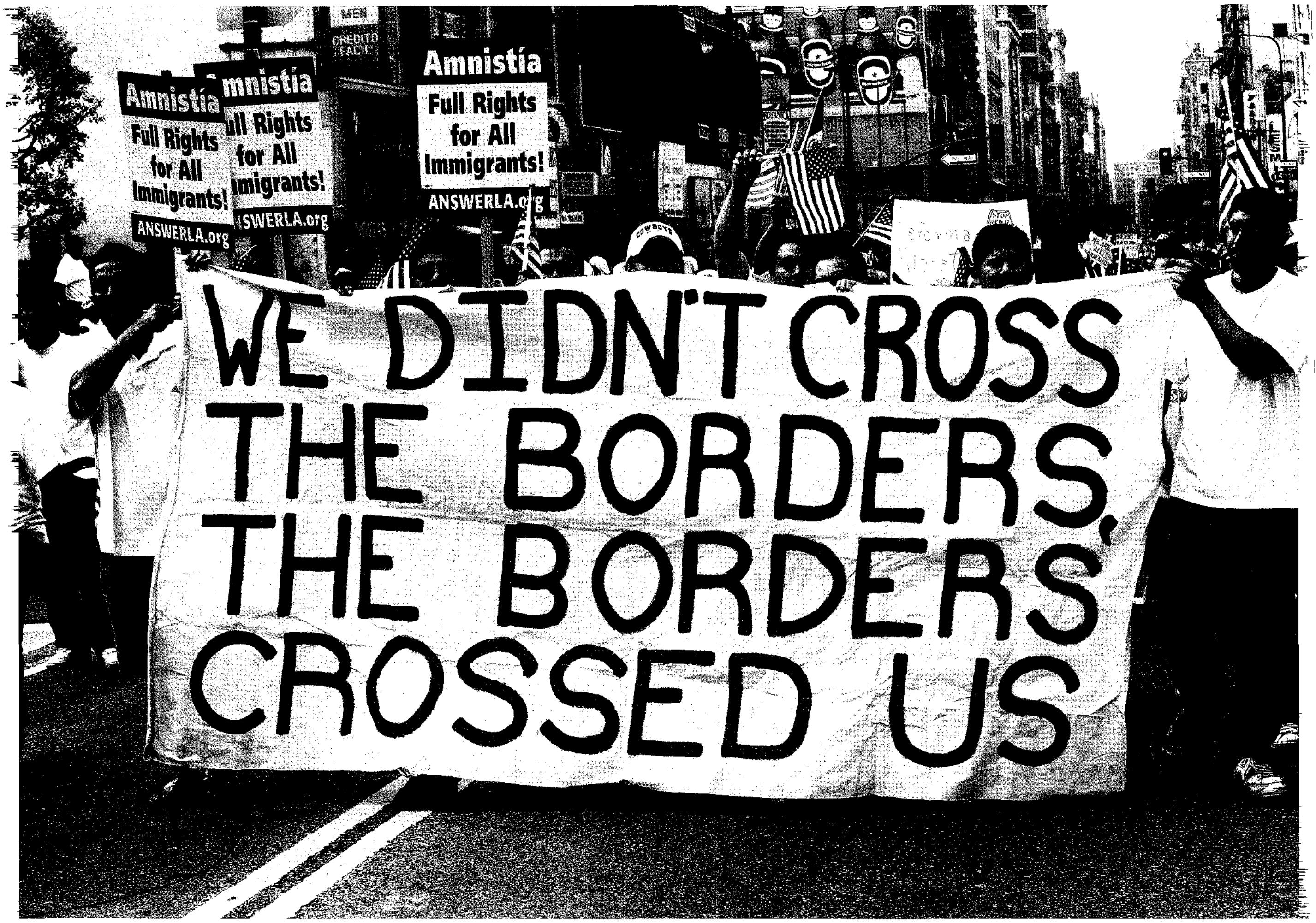
Principle 1: Respect the law. This year's illegal-alien demonstrators put forward a novel theory of entitlement: because we are here, we have a right to be here. Protesters in Santa Ana, California, shouted: "We are here and we're not going anywhere," reports the *Los Angeles Times*. Anger at the widespread contempt for American law contained in such defiant assertions drives much of the public hostility toward illegal aliens. Conservatives, with their respect for the rule of law, and appreciation for its fragility, would ordinarily honor this gut reaction, rather than dismissing it as some atavistic tribal impulse. Poverty and other grounds for victim status do not, in the conservative worldview, create a license for lawbreaking.

The rule of law ensures that like cases are treated alike and unlike cases distinguished. But if the immigration protesters have their way, someone who ignored all the procedures for legal entry will achieve the same status and benefits as someone who played by the rules. During the Senate's immigration debates in the spring, amnesty proponents claimed that it was unfair that people who have worked for American employers be forced to "live in the shadows." Left out of the equation was the question of justice to people who have waited for years in their own countries for permission to enter lawfully.

Protecting one form of lawbreaking may require protecting others as well. The city of Maywood in Los Angeles County declared itself a sanctuary zone for illegal aliens this year. Then it got rid of its drunk-driving checkpoints, because they were nabbing too many illegal aliens. Next, this 96 percent Latino city, almost half of whose adult population lacks a ninth-grade education, disbanded its police traffic division entirely, so that illegals wouldn't need to worry about having their cars towed for being unlicensed.

Principle 2: Protect sovereignty. Today's international elites seek to dissolve "discriminatory" distinctions between citizens and noncitizens and to discredit border laws aiming to control the flow of migrants. The spring amnesty demonstrations are a measure of how far such new anti-national-sovereignty ideas have spread. The last large-scale amnesty in 1986 was not preceded by mass demonstrations

MICHAEL NEWMAN/PHOTOEDIT, INC.


Amnistía
Full Rights for All Immigrants!
ANSWERLA.org
WE DIDN'T CROSS THE BORDERS, THE BORDERS CROSSED US

Attitudes like this make it hard for Mexican immigrants to assimilate into U.S. society.

by illegal aliens but was rather a bargaining chip among American legislators, negotiated in exchange for employer sanctions and a national worker-verification card. Predictably, the card never materialized, and the sanctions were never enforced; only the amnesty lived on.

By contrast, this year's protesters spoke the language of the anti-sovereignty intelligentsia. This increasingly influential discourse was on display at a May conference of Latin American diplomats at the Library of Congress, which spun endless variations on the identical theme: migration is a fundamental human right. As Nicaragua's minister of foreign affairs, Norman Caldera Cardenal, put it: "It is the responsibility of all nations to respect the dignity, integrity, and rights of all migrants." (The delegations dutifully acknowledged the U.S. prerogative to decide its own immigration policy, but these ritual genuflections were insignificant compared with the invocations of migrants' rights.) In less diplomatic language, Mexico's bicameral permanent legislative commission calls American immigration policy "racist, xenophobic, and a profound violation of human rights," reports George Grayson in *The American Conservative*.

Less than a week before the Library of Congress conference, illegal aliens on the streets of

Southern California were making the identical demands: "We just want some respect and human rights," a Santa Ana protester told the *Los Angeles Times*. "We're fighting to give [immigrants] equal rights," explained a marcher in Riverside, California, holding a "Legalize, Not Terrorize" sign.

This call for "human rights" is a clever one, for it hides its radical status in a rhetorical safe harbor. What, exactly, are the "human rights" that the U.S. is denying illegal aliens? They have unfettered access to free medical care, free education, welfare for their children, free representation in court when they commit crimes, every due-process protection during criminal prosecution that the Constitution guarantees citizens and legal immigrants, the shelter of labor laws, and the miracles of modern industrial society like clean water, the control of infectious diseases (including the ones that they bring with them), and plumbing. The only putative "right" that they lack—and that, of course, is the "human right" to which they and their ambassadors refer—is the right to legal status regardless of illegal entry.

So when the illegal-alien demonstrators and their government representatives demand respect for migrants' "human rights," they are asserting that U.S. immigration laws must fall before a more powerful claim. Despite the nondiscriminatory procedures for entry that Congress established, merely subjecting an illegal alien to an unequal status compared with legal migrants or citizens violates his human rights. Simply creating in his mind the teeniest thought that he may be penalized for his violation of American sovereignty is itself a callous abuse. The director of a Hispanic social-services agency in Georgia complained to the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* that the federal government's modest immigration arrests in April have "created a mental sickness, where people are depressed. Who wants to be thinking any minute you're going to be arrested." Mexico's consul general in Austin, Jorge Guajardo, echoed this sense of outrage at the "fear" the immigration arrests had caused: "It doesn't help society or anyone to have these people running scared," he told the *Austin American-Statesman*.

The Bush administration and its conservative supporters have defended American law against international claims to override it. To the applause of conservative pundits, the administration has unsigned the International Criminal Court treaty and withdrawn from the Kyoto global-warming protocol. It refused to wait for UN Security Council approval to start the invasion of Iraq. It has claimed the right to interpret international human rights laws for itself during the war on terror, rather than defer to nonelected bodies like the UN or the International Committee of the Red Cross. Conservative pundits have supported Israel's right to erect a security fence, despite the protestation by the UN International Court of Justice that the fence is illegal. Yet when it comes to immigration law, conservative open-borders advocates and the White House adopt the identical position as the growing anti-sovereignty movement, downplaying the violation of our border law and elevating the "rights" of the illegal migrant to sovereign status.

The illegal-alien rights movement has deployed another powerful contemporary rhetoric: ethnic victimology. As frequent as the demands during the protests to recognize illegals' "human rights" were the demands for "respect." "People have to learn to respect Mexicans, to respect immigrants and the work we do here," an L.A. demonstrator told the *Los Angeles Times*. "Respect for the migrant is fundamental," Costa Rica's minister of foreign affairs told the Library of Congress conference. According to this perspective, immigration policy insults aliens by subjecting them to different statuses according to whether they obeyed the law or not. While the rhetoric of wounded ethnic pride is long in the tooth by now, what is new about today's protests is not only the sense of entitlement with which lawbreakers strike such an attitude, but also that many conservatives back them.

If the Bush administration and its supporters believe that they can reassert the supremacy of American immigration law after yet another amnesty, they are fooling themselves. No one will take the assurance that "this time we mean business" seriously. If the executive branch is not willing to enforce the current law against violators, a new set of laws will not suddenly strengthen its resolve.

The fictions of the proposed guest-worker law are particularly self-deluded. No AWOL guest worker is going to think that he faces the slightest risk of deportation, knowing that the government won't even penalize people who entered the country illegally from Day One. If the proposed amnesty becomes law, expect illegal immigration to explode, just as it did after the 1986 amnesty, when illegal entry increased fivefold.

> **“Conservative open-borders advocates do not explain why policing affects domestic crime but not border crime.”**

Principle 3: Support law enforcement. Come-and-get-it immigration advocates endlessly assert that immigration enforcement can't work. This claim ignores the most important demonstration of conservative principles in the last 20 years.

Elite wisdom for decades held that the police cannot affect crime. The social forces pushing criminals to break the law—poverty, racism, addiction—were too powerful; policing could at best try to solve crimes after they happened. New York's Mayor Giuliani and his first police chief, William Bratton, rejected that fatalism. They empowered the New York Police Department to enforce aggressively laws that had long lain moribund. The targets of the new public-order push complained bitterly that it was unfair to arrest them for marijuana sales and other crimes after years of de facto decriminalization. The NYPD continued its enforcement drive anyway and brought crime down 70 percent in a decade. It turns out that the well-founded fear of getting caught changes behavior.

Conservative open-borders advocates do not explain why policing brings domestic crime down but can have no effect on border crime. Nor can they point to any evidence to support their claim, since immigration laws have never been enforced in the interior of the country. To be sure, border defenses have been fortified over the years, but the drill has been: if you can get past the border patrol, you are home free. The most important action the government could take to end illegal immigration would be to penalize employers that unlawfully hire illegal aliens, but in 2004, it issued fine notices to only three companies. With such a negligible risk of punishment, the law's deterrent effect has been zero. Illegal aliens, for their part, know that in none of their interactions with state services will anyone check their status—including, in most cities, when they are arrested for a crime—nor, if their illegal status is obvious, will anyone report them to the federal government.

Not only is the claim that enforcement doesn't work based on no evidence whatsoever, but in fact what evidence there is runs in the opposite direction. The merest hint of enforcement leads employers and illegal aliens to make different calculations about the advantages of breaking the law. Employers in Gwinnett County, north of Atlanta, have grown reluctant to hire illegals after highly publicized federal raids on an international pallet company in April and the passage of an omnibus Georgia law that, among other measures, punishes employers for breaking the immigration rules. The state law has not been enforced yet, but already fewer employers are seeking illegal day laborers. A Mexican from Guanajuato told the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* that he is going back home if the jobs picture doesn't pick up soon; others like him may be making similar plans.

Phoenix teaches the same lesson. Home Depot, on the city's central business artery, for years tolerated the hundreds of illegal Hispanics congregating outside the store and in its parking lot. Neighboring businesses complained bitterly about lost customers and the constant littering, trespassing, and public urination. This May, Home Depot posted signs against trespassing and picking up day laborers, and hired off-duty police officers to enforce the rules. Since then, the day laborers have almost completely disappeared.

Federal agencies have designated a stretch of the Texas border a zero-tolerance zone for border trespassing since December 6, 2005. Rather than releasing illegal entrants upon capture, the feds jail them for their border crime, then deport them. One Border Patrol agent told the *Washington Post* that the 51 percent drop in apprehensions since the operation began are "the most dynamic results" he had seen in 19 years on the force. The *Post* concluded: Operation Streamline II "has shown what it takes to stop the flow of illegal immigrants: aggressive enforcement of the laws on the books."

After 9/11, the Department of Homeland Security deported 1,500 illegal Pakistanis. An additional 15,000 then left voluntarily, reports Jessica Vaughan of the Center for Immigration Studies. There is no reason to think that this enforcement-through-attrition strategy won't work as well for Hispanic illegals. Simply requiring employers to verify the status of their workers would deny jobs to 3 million illegal workers, which should lead many to leave.

Immigration liberalizers wield the threat of mass deportations as the only alternative to amnesty. By now this argument borders on bad faith, since it has been refuted so many times. The attrition strategy—relying on illegal aliens to leave voluntarily as their access to American benefits diminishes—would work just as effectively, without coercion.

Many open-borders boosters are hawks in the war on terror. But since many of the methods that maintain the border's integrity overall are essential to keeping terrorists out of the country, these boosters should explain why they think we can wink at immigration-border violations and still protect the public against foreign enemies. Either we should give up on keeping immigration lawbreakers *and* terrorists from entering the country, or we should remain vigilant against both, since border security is key to terror protection.

Principle 4: Pay attention to facts on the ground. If someone proposed a program to boost the number of Americans who lack a high school diploma, have children out of wedlock, sell drugs, steal, or use welfare, he'd be deemed mad. Yet liberalized immigration rules would do just that. The illegitimacy rate among Hispanics is high and rising faster than that of other ethnic groups; their dropout rate is the highest in the country; Hispanic children are joining gangs at younger and younger ages. Academic achievement is abysmal.

Conservatives pride themselves on reality-based thinking that rejects utopian theories in favor of facts on the ground. Yet when it comes to immigration, they cling, against all contrary evidence, to the myth of the redeeming power of Hispanic family values, the Hispanic work ethic, and Hispanic virtue. Even more fanciful is the claim that it is immigrants' *children* who constitute the real value to American society. The children of today's Hispanic immigrants, in fact, are in considerable trouble.

Without doubt, many Latinos *are* upwardly mobile. But a significant portion of their children are getting sucked into street life, as a trip to almost any urban high school and some conversations with almost any Hispanic student will verify. In the field, the conservative fact-finder would learn that teen pregnancy is pervasive and that Hispanic boys increasingly regard fathering children as the prerequisite to becoming a "playah."

Conservatives have never shrunk from pointing out that dysfunctional behavior creates long-term poverty among inner-city blacks. But when Hispanics engage in the same behavior, they fall silent. From 1990 to 2004, the number of Hispanics in poverty rose 52 percent, accounting for 92 percent of the increase in poor people. The number of poor Hispanic children rose 43 percent, reports *Washington Post* columnist Robert Samuelson. By contrast, the number of poor black children has declined 17 percent since 1990.

JEFF TOPPING/GETTY IMAGES

UNDOCUMENTED
BORDER PATROL
AGENT

In most instances, conservatives trust the reports not of distant elites but of those closest to a problem.

The influx of dirt-poor Mexicans drives the Hispanic poverty increase, of course, but their behavior once here doesn't help.

Our immigration policy is creating a second underclass, one with the potential to expand indefinitely if current immigration rates merely stay the same, much less treble, as they would under the Hagel-Martinez Senate bill. Given the rapid increase in the Hispanic population, the prevalence of the following socially destructive behavior among Hispanics should be cause for serious concern.

Illegitimacy. Half of all children born to Hispanic Americans in 2002 were illegitimate, twice the rate for American whites and 42 percent higher than the overall American rate. The birthrate for Hispanic teens is higher than that for black teens. In Santa Ana, California, which has the highest proportion of people who speak Spanish at home of any large U.S. city—74 percent—the teen birthrate was twice the national teen average in 2000. This predilection for out-of-wedlock childbearing among Hispanics cannot be blamed solely on corrosive American culture, since the illegitimacy rate for foreign-born Hispanics is 40 percent. The illegitimacy rate in Mexico is 38 percent; in El Salvador, it is 72 percent.

It is hard to reconcile these statistics with the durable myth of superior Hispanic family values. A random walk through Santa Ana encountered ample evidence of Hispanic family breakdown. Livia came illegally from Mexico six years ago and then bore two illegitimate children; she now sells fruit from a pushcart on Main Street. A few blocks away, a 23-year-old illegal unmarried mother from El Salvador is protesting for smaller class sizes (an irony lost on her) outside a Santa Ana school board meeting. She came to the U.S. at age ten, dropped out of high school, and had her son "really young." He is now on welfare. This unwed mother prides herself on not having had any more children. "So many Latinas are having so many kids," she says disapprovingly. "Kids are having kids."

Even the mainstream media can't help stumbling across the Hispanic illegitimacy epidemic. Reporting on this spring's illegal-alien protests in downtown L.A., the *Los Angeles Times* turned up Guadalupe Aguilera, the mother of five illegitimate children. Aguilera thinks herself self-sacrificing for putting her children only on the WIC federal food program. If she had documents, she said, she could take advantage of a far greater range of welfare benefits. "I lose money that I could give my children," she complained to the *Times*. Increasingly, Hispanic family values mean collecting welfare for out-of-wedlock children.

Academic failure. It would be useful for open-borders optimists to spend some time in the Los Angeles Unified School District, which is 73 percent Hispanic, and where just 40 percent of Hispanic students graduate. (Nationwide, 53 percent of Hispanics graduate from high school, according to the Manhattan Institute's Jay Greene—the lowest rate among all ethnic groups.) Of those Hispanic students who do graduate, just 22 percent have completed the course work necessary for admission to a four-year state college—which means that of all Hispanic students who enter in ninth grade, fewer than 15 percent will graduate ready for college. Immigrant advocates have fiercely opposed in court a long-deferred California high school exit exam, which would require students to answer just over 50 percent of questions testing eighth-grade-level math and ninth-grade-level English. The California Research Bureau predicts that if the exam becomes a reality, Hispanic graduation rates would drop well below 30 percent.

A recent *Los Angeles Times* series on high school dropouts put some faces on the numbers. Eleven male Hispanic friends entered Birmingham High School in Van Nuys together in 2001; only three graduated. Because the boys spent so much time cutting classes—usually hanging out at fast-food restaurants—most failed to log any academic progress and saw no sense in staying enrolled. Drugs, turf rivalries, and fathering children also contributed to their failure to graduate. Birmingham's teachers despair at their students' lack of academic commitment and at their belief that seat time should entitle them to a passing grade. Reports Ronald Fryer in *Education Next*, hostility toward academic achievers is even higher among Hispanics than among blacks.

Schools spend huge sums trying to improve the Hispanic graduation rate, even hiring "outreach consultants" for dropout prevention. One Santa Ana consultant's approach is predictably multicultural. "We need to teach teachers that students need to be proud of where they are coming from," she told me. But of course Hispanic school failure derives not from ethnic neglect—the Santa Ana schools glorify the Hispanic heritage to a fault—but from parents who don't demand rigorous academic application and don't stand up to corrosive popular influences. At Santa Ana High School, I spoke with a former student, Julio, who had been expelled as a troublemaker in ninth grade, then returned briefly in the tenth grade but didn't take a single class. "Me and my friends ditched; our parents didn't know." It is the cultural capital that immigrants bring with them that most determines their success; the work ethic of poor Mexicans does not carry over to their children's schooling, and we are all paying the price.

The more-immigrants-the-better proponents counter that early-twentieth-century Italian immigrants were also indifferent to schooling but eventually joined the middle class. But by contrast with the economy of a century ago, today's knowledge-based economy values education above all else. College-educated workers have seen a 22 percent increase in real income since 1980, while high school dropouts lost 3 percent of their wages. High school dropouts will almost certainly remain poor, imposing huge welfare and health-care costs on taxpayers while lowering tax receipts. Native-born Hispanics collected welfare at over twice the rate as native-born whites in 2005; the foreign-born Hispanic welfare rate was nearly three times that of native-born whites.

> **"Between the Mexican generation and their American children, the incarceration rate jumps more than eightfold."**

Gang culture. In his prime-time May radio address promoting amnesty, President George Bush invoked a marine, Guadalupe Denogean, as the embodiment of immigrant values. Like Denogean, today's immigrants are willing, said Bush, "to risk everything for the dream of freedom." Many immigrants do share Denogean's patriotic ethic. But for every immigrant soldier, there are as many less admirable counterparts. A selection of Hispanic portraits could just as well have picked out Connie Retana, a 38-year-old Anaheim, California, resident, who in February egged on her 18-year-old son, Martin Delgado, as he and his gang friends raped a 23-year-old for seven hours in retaliation against the young woman's boyfriend. A survey of Hispanic family values might also include the Santa Ana mother who threatened in 2004 to kill her neighbors if they testified against her gangster son in a gun-assault case. Then there's the extended family of criminals in Pomona, California, who raised Valentino Arenas: the 18-year-old sought membership in Pomona's 12th Street gang by killing a California highway patrol officer in cold blood in April 2004. Following a sweep in May of the gang, which specializes in large-scale drug trafficking, murder, and extortion, Los Angeles district attorney Steve Cooley excoriated the families across the California Southland who are "aiding and abetting murders in Los Angeles County" by refusing to cooperate with authorities or curtail their children's crimes.

Open-borders conservatives point to the relatively low crime rate among immigrants to deny any connection between high immigration and crime. But unless we can prevent immigrants from having children, a high level of immigration translates to increased levels of crime. Between the foreign-born generation and their American children, the incarceration rate of Mexican-Americans jumps more than eightfold, resulting in an incarceration rate that is 3.45 times higher than that of whites, according to an analysis of 2000 census data by the pro-immigrant Migration Policy Institute.

California, with one-quarter of the nation's immigrants and its greatest concentration of Mexicans and Central Americans, is the bellwether state for all things relating to unbridled Hispanic immigration, including crime. The Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study, conducted by sociologists Alejandro Portes of Princeton and Rubén G. Rumbaut of the University of California, Irvine, followed the children of immigrants in San Diego and Miami from 1992 to 2003. A whopping 28 percent of Mexican-American males between the ages of 18 and 24 reported having been arrested since 1995, and 20 percent reported having been incarcerated—a rate twice that of other immigrant groups. Anyone who speaks to Hispanic students in immigrant-saturated schools in Southern California will invariably hear the estimate that 50 percent of a student's peers have ended up in gangs or other criminal activities.

Gang life—both Hispanic and black—immediately asserted itself last July when the Los Angeles Unified School District opened a model high school to ease overcrowding. Despite amenities that rival those of private schools—a swimming pool, Mac computers, a ballet studio, a rubber track, and a professional chef's kitchen—it instantly gained the distinction of being one of the most violent campuses in the system. Shots rang out in front of the school on the second day of classes, reports the *Los Angeles Times*, and three days after opening ceremonies, police arrested a student with an AK-47 on the campus perimeter. Brawling students attacked safety officers and tried to grab their guns in December, while cops pepper-sprayed a dean breaking up a

Mexico's Posturing Elites

The immigration mess has produced one compensation: the pleasure of watching the blowhard posturing of Mexico's elites. Molière's comic buffoons never achieved the sheer perfection of hypocrisy, gall, and self-abasement on almost daily display from the Mexican diplomatic and political corps.

The obsession with the Yanqui imperialist next door is Mexico's most serious wasting disease. Keeping the specter of Yanqui interference alive means blaming the U.S. for all of Mexico's problems and asserting Mexico's incapacity to solve those problems on its own. Yet this renunciation of agency does not entail humility. To the contrary, the more insistent the claim that Mexico can do nothing for itself, the louder its leaders roar, and the more aggressively they denounce their savior and nemesis.

A recent entry in this ongoing performance is a May 4 *New York Times* op-ed by Jorge Castañeda, former Mexican foreign minister and currently a professor of Latin American and Caribbean studies at New York University. As foreign minister, Castañeda played hardball, arguing that unless the U.S. gave Mexico what he called the "full enchilada," that is, amnesty for its illegal migrants and a much higher immigration ceiling, it would . . . it would . . . well, in truth it would do nothing but increase its furious criticism of American abuses.

In his *Times* op-ed, Castañeda continues his "amnesty or else" theme, but this time he has actually come up with an "or else": the further leftward lurch of Mexico and Latin America.

Castañeda distinguishes between two kinds of leftism: the "wrong" nationalist Left and the good "progressive" Left. (We will pass over his classically Latin American belief in the good Left.) The "wrong part of the Left" is gaining ground in Latin America, Castañeda says, in the persons of Venezuela's Hugo Chávez, Bolivia's Evo Morales, and Andrés Manuel López Obrador, a candidate in Mexico's July 2 presidential race. If López Obrador were to take the Mexican presidency (which as of this writing he apparently has failed to do, though he has not conceded), the "wrong" Left could end up "controlling a 2,000-mile border with the United States," Castañeda declares.

Whose responsibility is it to prevent the bad Left from taking over Mexico? America's, of course! After warning of a return of the "corrupt authoritarian machinery that governed Mexico for 70 years," Castañeda follows with a non sequitur: "This is where leadership on immigration reform from George W. Bush and broad-minded Republican senators comes in." Someone not stricken with Yanqui obsession might think that it is up to Mexicans to keep a destructive ideology out of their own house. But that hypothesis assumes agency on the part of El Norte's oppressed southern neighbor. Castañeda knows better. Rather, it is up to the U.S. to "strengthen support for Mexico's policies of the last decade" by passing "sensible" immigration reform and thus blocking the rise of López Obrador.

gang fight in March. Students sell meth in the classrooms, graffiti covers the stairwells, textbooks, and high-design umbrella-covered picnic tables, and a trip to the bathroom requires an adult safety escort.

Uncertain assimilation. Multicultural cheerleaders argue that assimilation is proceeding apace by pointing to the fact that virtually all third-generation Hispanics can speak English. Even so, linguistic and cultural segregation among Hispanics is increasing. The percentage of Hispanics living in Hispanic enclaves rose from 39 percent in 1990 to 43 percent in 2000, reports Robert Samuelson, and as more and more aliens from Mexico and Central America enter, the size of Spanish-speaking-only areas expands. Livia, the unmarried mother selling fruit on Santa Ana's Main Street, says that no one she associates with speaks English. A coffee-shop owner down the block observes that it's too easy in Santa Ana not to learn English. "It's all Spanish-speaking here," she says. In

Castañeda notes more in sorrow than in anger that after Mexican president Vicente Fox "staked much of his prestige on President Bush's commitment to fix immigration policy"—meaning, of course, opening the American border up further—"Mr. Bush left Mr. Fox empty-handed." Castañeda is willing to forgive, however, so long as the U.S. lives up to its responsibility to "give Mr. Fox a huge boost" by granting an amnesty and liberalizing its immigration rules.

One can think of many ways in which President Fox could have given *himself*—and his party's designated successor, Felipe Calderón—a huge boost. Purging corruption in the police forces and throughout government, freeing entrepreneurs from crippling regulations, ending state control of vital industries, and encouraging and protecting foreign investment are but a few. Such actions, however, would require dismantling the status quo. It is much easier to demand that the U.S. open the border safety valve further, so that millions of surplus Mexicans, unable to find opportunity for advancement in the lethargic, overregulated Mexican economy, can escape rather than revolt.

As a former diplomat, Castañeda can snarl as well as wheedle and whine. He warns that nothing could offer "better proof" to the wrong Left of "America's not-so-benign neglect and imperial arrogance as further paralysis on immigration." Oh, dear. Here Castañeda has been playing the good leftie to Hugo Chávez's and Evo Morales's bad leftie, and now it turns out that there is not much difference between them. Both kinds of leftie at heart view the U.S. as a malign imperial force, despite its billions in foreign aid and the blanket of security protection that it offers Latin America.

Like the maestro that he is, Castañeda saves his most brilliant move for the end. After a column devoted to the proposition that it is America's responsibility to keep the bad lefties out of Mexico's presidential palace, Castañeda pulls out that hoariest of conspiracy theories: American meddling in Mexican sovereignty! By opening its borders fully, Castañeda explains, the U.S. would encourage Mexican political "continuity . . . without interfering in its neighbor's political process." Just when you thought that Castañeda's combination of chest-thumping bravado, cultivated helplessness, and hypocrisy could not get any more shameless, he tops himself. Hardly a day goes by when Mexican officials don't hand out identification cards to illegal Mexicans in the U.S. and promote the cards as a de facto legalizing device, don't advise their citizens about safe illegal travel into the U.S., and don't berate American policymakers for distinguishing illegal from legal migrants. Yet here is Castañeda snappishly warning against *American* political interference, even as he demands that America guarantee President Fox's political legacy.

A more economically and psychologically stable southern neighbor would benefit the U.S. enormously, but it would come at a considerable cost in entertainment value.

California, the academic achievement gap between students with little English and English speakers is widening.

Meanwhile, taxpayers are footing the bill for interpreters across a host of government functions and for the translation of countless government documents. California spends $82.7 million a year on criminal-court interpreters for those 40 percent of its residents who speak a language other than English at home. At the same time, Spanish may be developing into a language of cultural assertion and opposition. A Hispanic resident of El Paso told New York's radio station WNYC in May that teen workers in fast-food and other retail outlets regularly refuse to answer her in English when she addresses them. At a city council meeting this March in Maywood, California, the illegal-alien sanctuary, a resident suggested that a council member was using English as a sign of disrespect. All this adds up to a significant, and accelerating, transformation of American culture.

Pro-amnesty forces promote the Ellis Island conceit that illegal immigrants "risk everything for the dream of freedom," as President Bush put it in his May address. The president's assessment, while flattering, is not particularly accurate. However lousy the Mexican economy, there are few if any political freedoms enjoyed by Americans that Mexico denies. It is the Yanqui dollar, not untasted freedom, that brings the vast majority of illegals here. "The dream that most of us hold on to is the Mexican dream," Efrain Jimenez, an official with the Federation of Zacatecan Clubs of Southern California, told me last year. "The Mexican dream is to make enough money to go back and own your own business. Four-fifths of Mexicans here would say that if they had a job in Mexico, they'd go back right away." Most Mexican immigrants do not intend to become Americans; they come wanting to return to their home country, but end up staying out of inertia. They naturalize at half the rate of Asians or Europeans. This is not a recipe for assimilation.

Principle 5: Prefer local decision makers over remote elites. Illegal immigration has prompted a powerful grassroots democratic reaction, as people in areas most affected by Hispanic immigration try to regain control of their communities. Cities, counties, and states have passed laws to regulate day-laborer sites, to push employers into compliance with immigration laws, to allow police officers to cooperate with federal immigration agents, to prevent illegal aliens from collecting welfare and from voting, and to tighten driver's-license requirements, among other initiatives.

After appeals from illegal-alien advocacy groups, judges have struck down many of these laws. Ordinarily, conservatives would deplore such thwarting of the people's will. When it comes to illegal immigration, however, they side with the elites in robes and on Capitol Hill who dismiss the public as know-nothing rubes. Open-borders conservatives denounce California's Proposition 187 as vehemently as any Hispanic activist, even though the judicially overruled referendum—which denied nonemergency free health care and free public education to illegal aliens—was simply a cry for help from California taxpayers, struggling with the enormous strains that illegal aliens were putting on their state's social welfare systems.

Conservatives have historically trusted local decision making over distant Washington solutions. The tradition of federalism holds that people closest to a problem are best able to assess and resolve it. Yet the open-borders Right waves away the fervent local lawmaking around illegal immigration as merely an outbreak of xenophobia. Would such conservative legalizers argue that the 63 cities and counties that founded the Coalition of Mayors and County Executives for Immigration Reform, a movement trying to alert Washington to the burdens of illegal immigration, have been taken over by racists? Do they really think that they themselves see matters more clearly than angry local residents whose local hospital has gone bankrupt under the strain of serving immigrants with no insurance, or than parents who no longer feel welcome in their local schools, or than business owners harmed by the crowds of day laborers on the sidewalk who scare their customers away?

Connecticut's Greenwich Hospital recently treated an illegal Guatemalan with severe drug-resistant TB, after his local hospital in Port Chester, New York, had gone bust from uninsured immigrants. The uncompensated bill for two and a half months of in-patient treatment totaled $200,000, not including the fees for the numerous specialists on the case, which probably added another $100,000 to $150,000. One surgery alone to remove a crippling accretion on his spine—a condition unknown outside the Third World—lasted an entire day. All of the Guatemalan's associates tested positive for TB, and all worked in restaurants, reports his surgeon, Dr. Katrina Firlik, in the *Wall Street Journal.* Such episodes, invisible to conservative elites, make a deep impression on local taxpayers and insurance policyholders.

> **"Most Mexican immigrants do not want to become Americans; they come wanting to return to their home country."**

Arizona and California lawmakers want to free taxpayers from the nearly $1 billion a year burden of detaining illegal criminals—and the even costlier burden of detaining those illegals' children. In Fresno, now 45 percent Hispanic, 20 percent of the county jail inmates are illegal immigrants, as are about one-quarter of emergency-room patients. No wonder Fresno's mayor called in November 2005 for securing the border. The county of Riverside, California, voted in April to start turning in its illegal-alien jail inmates—who make up between 12 and 25 percent of its inmate population—to the Immigration and Customs Enforcement, joining a handful of jail systems now abandoning the long-standing taboo against checking criminals' immigration status. Naturally, immigrant advocates in Southern California have branded the new policy a civil rights violation.

Lived experience fuels these citizen movements for immigration control. If conservatives dismiss them as delusional, the Republican Party will pay dearly at the polls. Rather than dismissing the public's anguish over large-scale lawbreaking, conservatives should honor the public's commitment to the sanctity of the legislative will.

The proponents of amnesty have manufactured an artificial crisis. They say that it is imperative to legalize the millions of illegals here *now,* so that the illegals can "come out of the shadows." In reality, the minor inconveniences imposed by illegal status are nothing more than what the illegals bargained for. Illegal aliens have no legitimate claim to be legalized *before* the country makes sure that its border control is working. Enforcement must precede a liberalization of immigration rules—which is why "comprehensive" immigration reform (the conservative code word for amnesty and increased levels of immigration) is not the solution to our border crisis but rather a guarantee of continued anarchy. Amnesty and the impossibility of enforcing a complicated new immigration scheme will undermine border control, just as they did in 1986. The first item of business on the conservative agenda should be enforcing the law already on the books.

But the most important value that conservatives can bring to this debate is honesty. Many of the costs imposed by Mexican immigrants are a function of their lack of education, their low incomes, and their own and their children's behavior, not their legal status. Without question, we must balance those costs against the immigrant generation's admirable work ethic. But immigration reform that institutionalizes the present immigration mix—or, worse, increases its volume by three to five times—is certain to expand the Hispanic underclass. There are many educated foreigners patiently waiting for permission to migrate to the United States. The United States can better honor its immigrant heritage by accelerating their entry rather than by continuing to favor the most low-skilled of our neighboring populations.

The Ed Schools' Latest—and Worst—Humbug

Teaching for "social justice" is a cruel hoax on disadvantaged kids.

Sol Stern

In 1980, Bill Ayers and his partner Bernardine Dohrn came up from the underground—the Weather Underground, that is. It had been a wild ride for the Bonnie and Clyde of the sixties New Left. They first went into combat during the 1969 "Days of Rage" in Chicago, smashing storefront windows and assaulting police officers and city officials in the fantasy that they were aiding their Vietnamese allies by "bringing the war back home." They spent the next few years planting bombs at government buildings around the country, including in restrooms at the Pentagon and the Capitol. When their little war against America sputtered to a halt, the revolutionary couple rationalized that at least they had not caused any deaths. But three of their comrades had blown themselves up in a Manhattan townhouse while preparing a bomb to detonate at a dance at the Fort Dix army base.

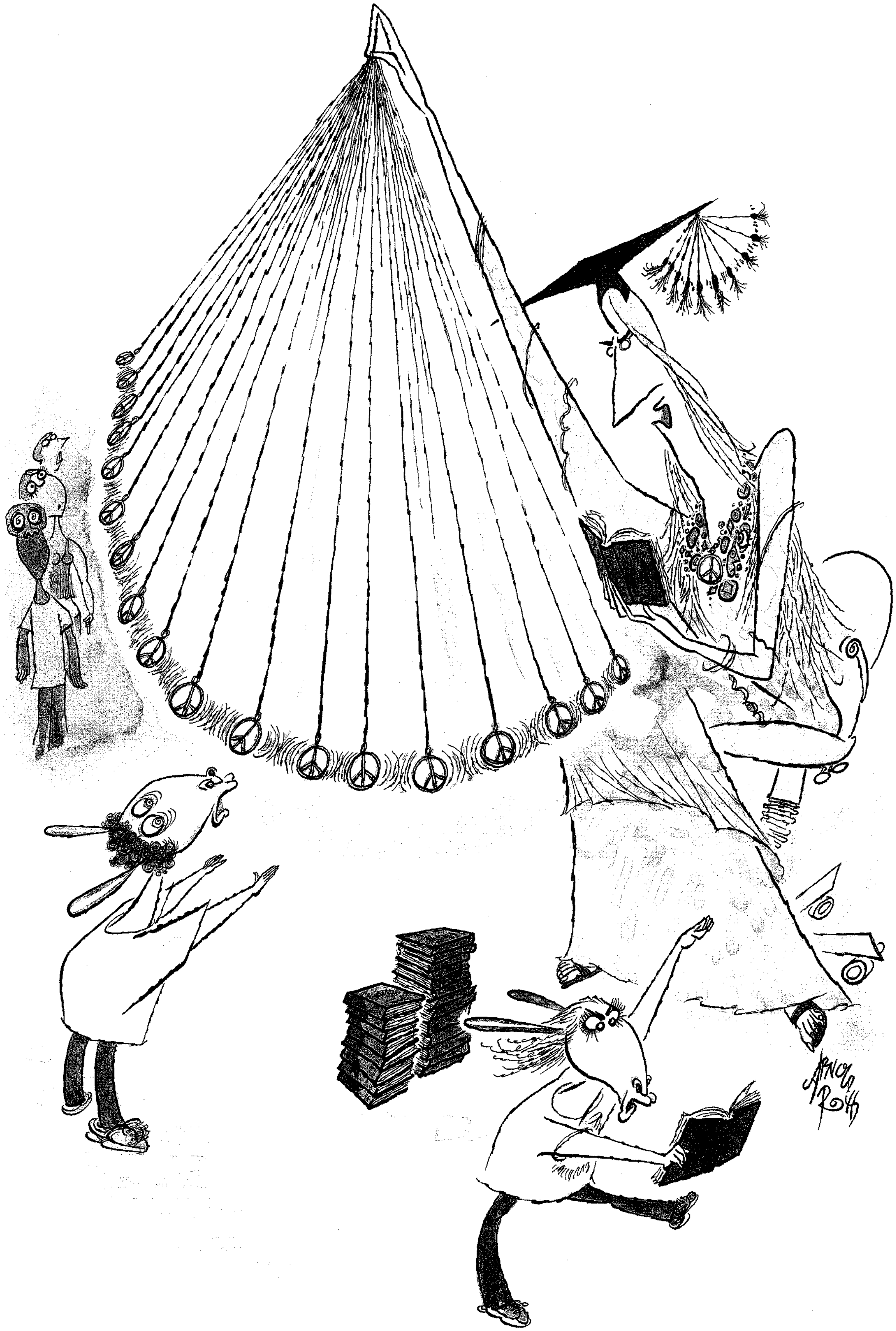
Ayers has acknowledged committing crimes during his underground days—crimes that arguably amounted to treason. Yet thanks to procedural complications and a lack of witnesses, he never went to trial or to jail. A few years after stepping out of the shadows, Ayers reflected on his odyssey in a conversation with journalists Peter Collier and David Horowitz: "Guilty as hell, free as a bird—America is a great country," he exulted.

But that was just half the wonder of it. Ayers would soon go on to disprove thoroughly F. Scott Fitzgerald's famous though mistaken aphorism that "there are no second acts in American lives." Ayers's spectacular second act began when he enrolled at Columbia University's Teachers College in 1984. Then 40, he planned to stay just to get a teaching credential. (He had taught in a "Freedom School" during his pre-underground student radical days.) But he experienced an epiphany in a course taught by Maxine Greene, a leading light of the "critical pedagogy" movement. As Ayers wrote later, he took fire from Greene's lectures on how the "oppressive hegemony" of the capitalist social order "reproduces" itself through the traditional practice of public schooling—critical pedagogy's fancy way of saying that the evil corporations exercise thought control through the schools.

It hadn't occurred to Ayers that an ed-school professor could speak or write as an authentic American radical. "There are vast dislocations in industrial towns, erosions of trade unions; there is little sign of class consciousness today," Greene had proclaimed in the *Harvard Education Review*. "Our great cities are burnished on the surfaces, building high technologies, displaying astonishing consumer goods. And on the side streets, in the crevices, in the burnt-out neighborhoods, there are the rootless, the dependent, the sick, the permanently unemployed. There is little sense of agency, even among the brightly successful; there is little capacity to look at things as if they could be otherwise."

Greene told future teachers that they could help change this bleak landscape by developing a "transformative" vision of social justice and democracy in their classrooms. Her vision, though, was a far cry from the democratic optimism of the Founding Fathers, Abraham Lincoln, and Martin Luther King Jr., which most parents would endorse. Instead, critical pedagogy theorists nurse a rancorous view of an America in which it is always two minutes to midnight and a knock on the door by the thought police is imminent. The education professors feel themselves anointed to use the nation's K–12

Illustrations by Arnold Roth


Arnold Roth

classrooms to resist this oppressive system. Thus Maxine Greene urged teachers not to mince words with children about the evils of the existing social order. They should portray "homelessness as a consequence of the private dealings of landlords, an arms buildup as a consequence of corporate decisions, racial exclusion as a consequence of a private property-holder's choice." In other words, they should turn the little ones into young socialists and critical theorists.

All music to Bill Ayers's ears. The ex-Weatherman glimpsed a new radical vocation. He dreamed of bringing the revolution from the streets to the schools. And that's exactly what he has managed to do.

In record time Ayers acquired an Ed.D. with a dissertation titled "The Discerning 'I': Accounts of Teacher Self-Construction Through the Use of Co-Biography, Metaphor, and Image." There wasn't much biography, metaphor, or image in the 180-page text. Ayers's research consisted solely of a few days spent interviewing and observing the classroom practices of three nursery school teachers he knew personally. (In Ayers's own autobiographical section of the text—*de rigueur* for Teachers College dissertations—he reminisced about growing up in a wealthy Chicago suburb, about his warm family, and about having been arrested in campus antiwar demonstrations. Of his bomb-making skills or his ten years in the underground he said not a word.)

With his Teachers College credential in hand, Ayers landed an ed-school appointment back in Chicago, where his father was CEO of Commonwealth Edison and nicely plugged in to the city's political establishment. These days, Ayers carries the joint titles of Distinguished Professor of Education and Senior University Scholar at the University of Illinois at Chicago. One of his several books on the moral imperative of teaching for social justice is a bestseller in ed-school courses. Like many other tenured and well-heeled radicals, Ayers keeps hoping for a revolutionary upheaval that will finally bring down American capitalism and imperialism. But now, instead of planting bombs in bathrooms, he has been planting the seeds of resistance and rebellion in America's future teachers, who will then pass on the lessons to the students in their classrooms.

Future teachers signing up for Ayers's course "On Urban Education" can read these exhortations from the course description on the professor's website:

"Homelessness, crime, racism, oppression—we have the resources and knowledge to fight and overcome these things."

"We need to look beyond our isolated situations, to define our problems globally. We cannot be child advocates . . . in Chicago or New York and ignore the web that links us with the children of India or Palestine."

"In a truly just society there would be a greater sharing of the burden, a fairer distribution of material and human resources."

For another course, titled "Improving Learning Environments," Ayers proposes that teachers "be aware of the social and moral universe we inhabit and . . . be a teacher capable of hope and struggle, outrage and action, a teacher teaching for social justice and liberation."

The readings that Ayers assigns are as intellectually stimulating and diverse as a political commissar's indoctrination session in one of his favorite communist tyrannies. The reading list for his urban education course includes the bible of the critical pedagogy movement, Brazilian Marxist Paolo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed;* two books by Ayers himself; another by bell hooks, a radical black feminist writer and critical race theorist; and a "Freedom School" curriculum. That's the entire spectrum of debate.

For students who might get bored with the purely pedagogic approach to liberation, Ayers also offers a course on the real thing, called "Social Conflicts of the 1960's." For this class Ayers also posts his introduction to the soon-to-be-published collection of Weather Underground agitprop that he edited with Dohrn—called, with no intended parody, *Sing a Battle Song: The Revolutionary Poetry, Statements and Communiqués of the Weather Underground, 1970-1974.* "Once things were connected," Ayers's introduction recollects, "we saw a system at work, we were radicalized, we named that system—imperialism—and forged an idea of how to overthrow it. We were influenced by Marx, but we were formed more closely and precisely by Che, Ho, Malcolm X, Amílcar Cabral, Mandela—the Third World revolutionaries—and we called ourselves small 'c' communists to indicate our rejection of what had become of Marx in the Soviet Block [*sic*]. . . . We were anti-authoritarian, anti-orthodoxy, communist street fighters."

Ayers makes clear that his political views haven't changed much since those glory days. He cites a letter he recently wrote: "I've been told to grow up from the time I was ten until this morning. Bullshit. Anyone who salutes your 'youthful idealism' is a patronizing reactionary. Resist! Don't grow up! I went to Camp Casey [Cindy Sheehan's vigil at the Bush ranch in Crawford, Texas] in August precisely because I'm an agnostic about how and where the rebellion will break out, but I know I want to be there and I know it will break out."

America's historical ideal of public schooling as a means of assimilating all children (and particularly the children of new immigrants) into a common civic and democratic culture is already under assault from the multiculturalists and their race- and gender-centered pedagogy. Now Ayers and his social justice movement, by dismissing the civic culture ideal as nothing more than "capitalist hegemony," subvert the public schools even further—while subsidized by the taxpayers, including the capitalists who supposedly control the schools.

And it's not just from his government-funded outpost at the University of Illinois that Ayers is spreading the word about radical social justice teaching. He maintains a busy lecture schedule at other ed schools around the country, and he does teacher training and professional development for the Chicago public schools. All that still leaves him enough time to give nostalgic lectures on college campuses about his Weather Underground experiences.

He also turns up from time to time as a guest lecturer at Teachers College, where he gets a hero's welcome. In describing one of those events, the official college publication, *Inside TC,* turned as ecstatic as a groupie at a rock concert: "A man sporting sunglasses, an earring in each earlobe, khaki pants, a sweater and tweed jacket strode purposefully past the entry and down the hallway toward the auditorium. . . . His intensity and passion were tangible in the way he walked through the crowd. He was the speaker for the evening, William Ayers. . . . A former leader of the radical Weathermen organization in the 1960s, Ayers not only believes in the obligation to assist people on the bottom, he acts on it."

In 1997, Ayers and his mentor Maxine Greene persuaded Teachers College Press to launch a series of books on social justice teaching, with Ayers as editor and Greene serving on the editorial board (along with Rashid Khalidi, loyal supporter of the Palestinian cause and the Edward Said Professor of Arab Studies at Columbia University). Twelve volumes have appeared so far, including one titled *Teaching Science for Social Justice*.

Teaching *science* for social justice? Let Teachers College professor Angela Calabrese Barton, the volume's principal author, try to explain: "The marriages between capitalism and education and capitalism and science have created a foundation for science education that emphasizes corporate values at the expense of social justice and human dignity." The alternative? "Science pedagogy framed around social justice concerns can become a medium to transform individuals, schools, communities, the environment, and science itself, in ways that promote equity and social justice. Creating a science education that is *transformative* implies not only how *science is a political activity* but also the ways in which students might see and use science and science education in ways transformative of the institutional and interpersonal power structures that play a role in their lives." If you still can't appreciate why it's necessary for your child's chemistry teacher to teach for social justice, you are probably hopelessly wedded to reason, empiricism, individual merit, and other capitalist and post-colonialist deformities.

The series doesn't yet have a text on mathematics, but it's sure to come, since the pedagogy for teaching social justice through math is even more fully developed than for science. One of the leading lights of the genre is Eric Gutstein, a Marxist colleague of Ayers's at the University of Illinois and also a full-time Chicago public school math teacher. Gutstein's new book, *Reading and Writing the World with Mathematics: Toward a Pedagogy for Social Justice*, combines critical pedagogy theory and real live math lessons that Gutstein piloted with his predominantly minority seventh-grade students.

Like Ayers, Gutstein reveres Paolo Freire. He approvingly quotes Freire's dictum that "there neither is, nor has ever been, an educational practice in zero space-time—neutral in the sense of being committed only to preponderantly abstract, intangible ideas." Gutstein takes this to mean that since all education is political, leftist math teachers who care about the oppressed have a right, indeed a duty, to use a pedagogy that, in Freire's words, "does not conceal—in fact, which proclaims—its own political character."

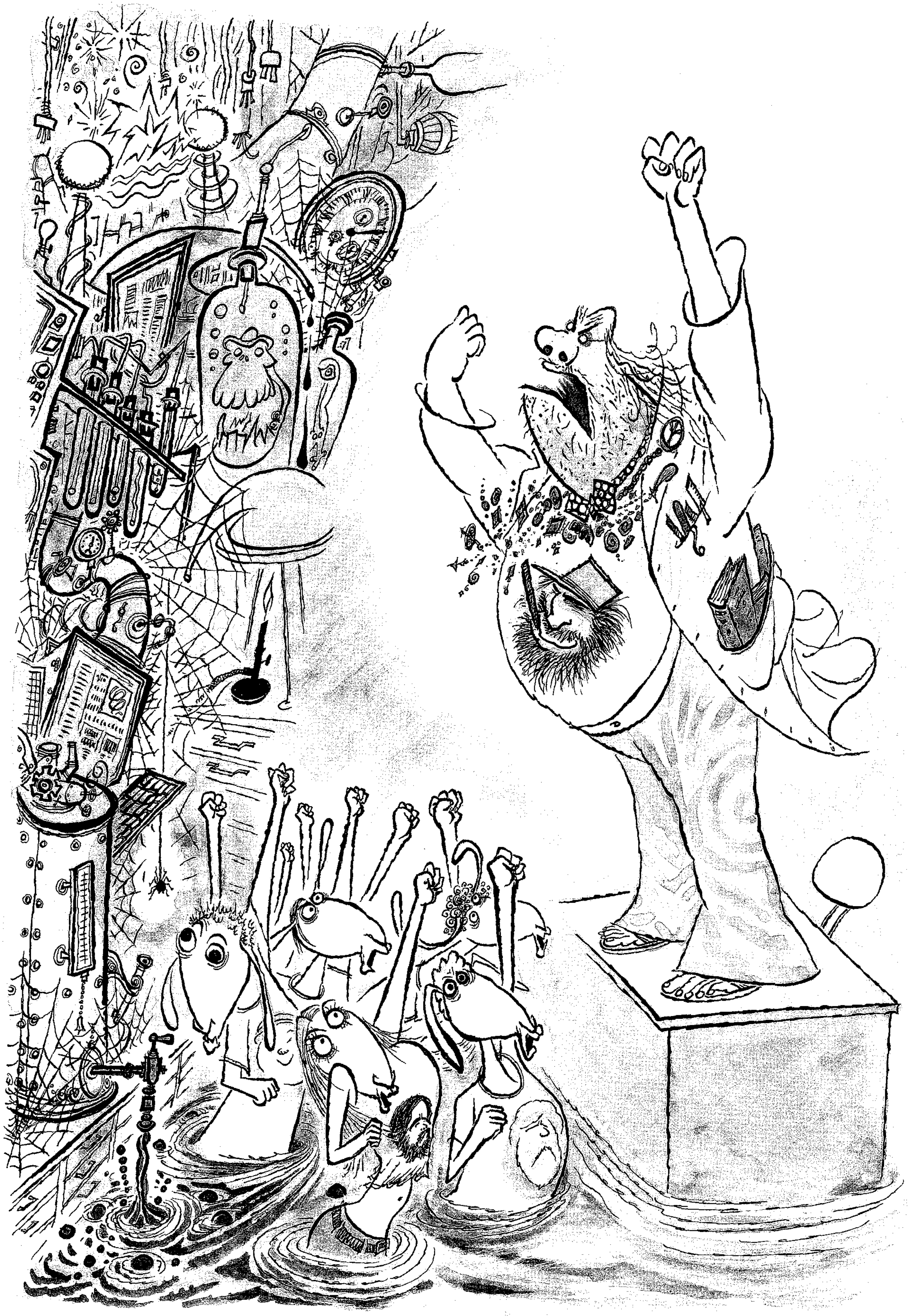
Accordingly, Gutstein has relentlessly politicized his math classes for years, claiming that this approach has improved his students' math skills while making them more aware of the injustices built in to capitalist society. One lesson, for example, presents charts showing the U.S. income distribution, aiming to get the students to understand the concept of percentages and fractions, while simultaneously showing them how much wealth is concentrated at the top in an economic system that mainly benefits the superrich. After the class does the mathematical calculations, Gutstein asks: "How does all this make you feel?" He triumphantly reports that 19 of 21 students described wealth distribution in America as "bad," "unfair," or "shocking," and he proudly quotes the comments of a child named Rosa: "Well I see that all the wealth in the United States is mostly the wealth of a couple people not the whole nation."

Gutstein's book will likely sell very well, not because all math teachers will thrill to his Freirian dialectics or Chomskyite denunciations of American foreign policy, but because they may find his lesson plans and classroom projects useful. After all, they are under intense pressure from the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics to move away from the traditional emphasis on computational skills like multiplication tables and algorithms—a teaching method that university mathematicians still favor but that many K–12 math teachers dismiss as "drill and kill." Teachers (particularly liberal and left-leaning teachers) who instead use a "constructivist" or "discovery-based" pedagogy, sometimes called "fuzzy math," in which students learn mathematical concepts by trying to solve real-life problems, will see Gutstein's social justice lessons on how military budgets for the war in Iraq deny poor Americans their fair share of resources as an advance beyond problems about baseball statistics, shopping, or building.

Even more important, Gutstein's book comes with the imprimatur of two of the nation's most influential ed profs, Gloria Ladson-Billings of the University of Wisconsin and William F. Tate of Washington University in St. Louis—the outgoing and incoming presidents of the American Education Research Association. The 25,000-member AERA is *the* umbrella organization of the ed-school professoriate, and over the past two decades it has moved steadily left, becoming more multicultural, postmodernist, feminist, and enamored of critical race theory and queer theory.

And now the organization has just hired its first national Director of Social Justice. In fact, Ladson-Billings and Tate have coedited their own volume of essays on educational research and social justice, wherein they argue for a critical race theory approach, based on the idea that institutionalized "white supremacy" remains pervasive in American public education. Left unexplained is how these two particular critical race theorists, both black, could have been elected by their overwhelmingly white peers to preside over the education establishment's premier organization.

One by one, the education schools are lining up behind social justice teaching and enforcing



it on their students—especially since they expect aspiring teachers to possess the approved liberal "dispositions," or individual character traits, that will qualify them to teach in the public schools. The National Council on the Accreditation of Teacher Education, the main accreditor of education schools, now monitors how well the schools comply with their own social justice requirements.

With the caveat that not all education schools have yet joined the trend, here is a sampler, going from east to west.

Brooklyn College of the City University of New York recently declared: "Because democracy requires a substantive concern for equity, the faculty of the School of Education is committed, in theory and practice, to social justice. . . . We believe that an education centered on social justice prepares the highest quality of future teachers. . . . Our teacher candidates and other school personnel are prepared to demonstrate a knowledge of, language for, and the ability to create educational environments based on various theories of social justice."

The teacher education program at Marquette University in Milwaukee proclaims that it "has a commitment to social justice in schools and society" and to using education "to transcend the negative effects of the dominant culture." It requires that all education degree candidates demonstrate a "desire to work for social justice, particularly in an urban environment." Similarly, the University of Kansas ed school declares that "addressing issues of diversity includes being more global than national and concerned with ideals such as world peace, social justice, respect for diversity and preservation of the environment."

On the West Coast, the highly regarded Claremont Graduate University not only requires teacher candidates to commit to social justice teaching but screens applicants to make sure they have that essential "disposition." According to a recent university publication, "CGU's recruitment efforts focus upon individuals who have an understanding of societal inequities. . . . By reflecting the cultures and languages of the student populations in area K–12 schools and by caring about issues of social justice, CGU's teachers are role models to their students in a variety of ways."

At Humboldt State University in northern California, the social studies methods class required for prospective high school history and social studies teachers best demonstrates the school's commitment to social justice teaching. The professor, Gayle Olson-Raymer, states the course's purpose right up front in her syllabus: "*It is not an option for history teachers to teach social justice and social responsibility; it is a mandate.* History teachers do their best work when they use their knowledge, their commitment, and their courage to help the students grapple with the important issues of social responsibility and when they encourage them to direct their lives towards creating a just society."

How does your average, traditional-minded future teacher cope in an education class taught from a social justice or critical race theory perspective? Such students are well-advised to bite their tongues or risk career-threatening penalties. For all their talk about teaching for "freedom and democracy," the professors often run their own classes like leftist political indoctrination sessions.

Brooklyn College and Washington State University, according to recent published reports, have denied students the right to become teachers after they ran afoul of their ed schools' social justice dispositions requirements. Then there's the notorious case of Steve Head, a 50-year-old Silicon Valley software engineer who decided to make a career switch a few years ago and obtain a high school math teaching credential. In a rational world, Head would be the poster boy for the federal government's new initiatives to recruit more math and science teachers for our high schools. Instead, his story sends the message that education professors would rather continue molding future teachers' attitudes on race and social justice issues than help the U.S. close the math and science achievement gap with other industrialized nations.

Head was smoothly completing all his math-related course work at taxpayer-supported San Jose State University. Then in the fall of 2003, he enrolled in the required “Social, Philosophical, and Multicultural Foundations of Education,” taught by Helen Kress, whose main scholarly interest appears to be “critical whiteness studies,” a noxious branch of critical race theory that posits that white racial identity is a socially constructed characteristic and must be confronted and purged to overcome America’s institutionalized system of white supremacy. The foundations course functions as a sort of military checkpoint to guarantee that every student who passes through toward a teaching credential has properly imbibed the pedagogies of multiculturalism, critical race theory, feminism, and, of course, social justice teaching.

> **“For all their talk about ‘freedom and democracy,’ the profs run their classes like leftist indoctrination sessions.”**

The easy way out would have been for Head to spew back the expected answers on racial and gender oppression and move on, as most traditional-minded education students do. But something about Steve Head—a Christian and a libertarian—made him gag at the big lies and logical absurdities about American race relations and immigration issues that he was being asked to regurgitate. So he turned the tables and deconstructed the hegemony of anti-Americanism in the classroom.

In a sworn legal document, Head recounted that when his professor showed the class a videotape purporting to reveal institutional racism against immigrants, he responded by suggesting that most immigrants actually came here because they realized they would be better off, including benefiting from healthier race relations. Professor Kress responded that anyone holding such opinions was clearly “unfit to teach.” Head further infuriated the professor by suggesting that the class be allowed to read black social scientists like Thomas Sowell and Walter Williams to provide some intellectual balance on the issues of race and education.

After turning down Kress’s offer to reeducate him on these issues personally, Head received an F for the class, even though a grade below B for a student who has completed all assignments is almost as rare in ed schools as serious intellectual debate. The school wouldn’t let Head enroll in the student teaching class, and so, for the time being, it has blocked him from getting his teaching certificate. After exhausting his appeals to the university, he filed suit earlier this year, charging that the school was applying a political litmus test to become a teacher and had violated his First Amendment rights.

“I could have lied about my beliefs in class, but what is the point of that in America?” Head told me. “We are not free unless we choose to exercise our freedoms without fear of reprisals. I choose freedom, and I choose to defend my beliefs against state indoctrination.”

Though no one has as yet surveyed how far social justice teaching has pervaded America’s 1,500 ed schools, education researchers David Steiner (now Hunter College ed-school dean) and Susan Rozen did a study two years ago on the syllabi of the basic “foundations of education” and “methods” courses in 16 of the nation’s most prestigious ed schools. The mainstays of the foundations courses were works by Paolo Freire, Henry Giroux (a leading critical pedagogy theorist), and the radical education writer Jonathan Kozol (“America’s Most Influential—and Wrongest—School Reformer,” Winter 2000). For the methods courses, Bill Ayers’s *To Teach: The Journey of a Teacher* tops the bestseller list. Neither list included advocates of a knowledge-based and politically neutral curriculum, such as E. D. Hirsch Jr. or Diane Ravitch.

An ed-school system that bars math teachers like Steve Head, who want to teach without bringing politics into the classroom, while celebrating Eric Gutstein's Marxist indoctrination of future math teachers, is fundamentally corrupt. And this travesty is now reaching beyond the ed schools to local school boards and district superintendents, who are setting up entire schools dedicated to social justice. Not only do these schools infuse social justice throughout the curriculum, but they also often require students to engage in "community activism" outside of school hours.

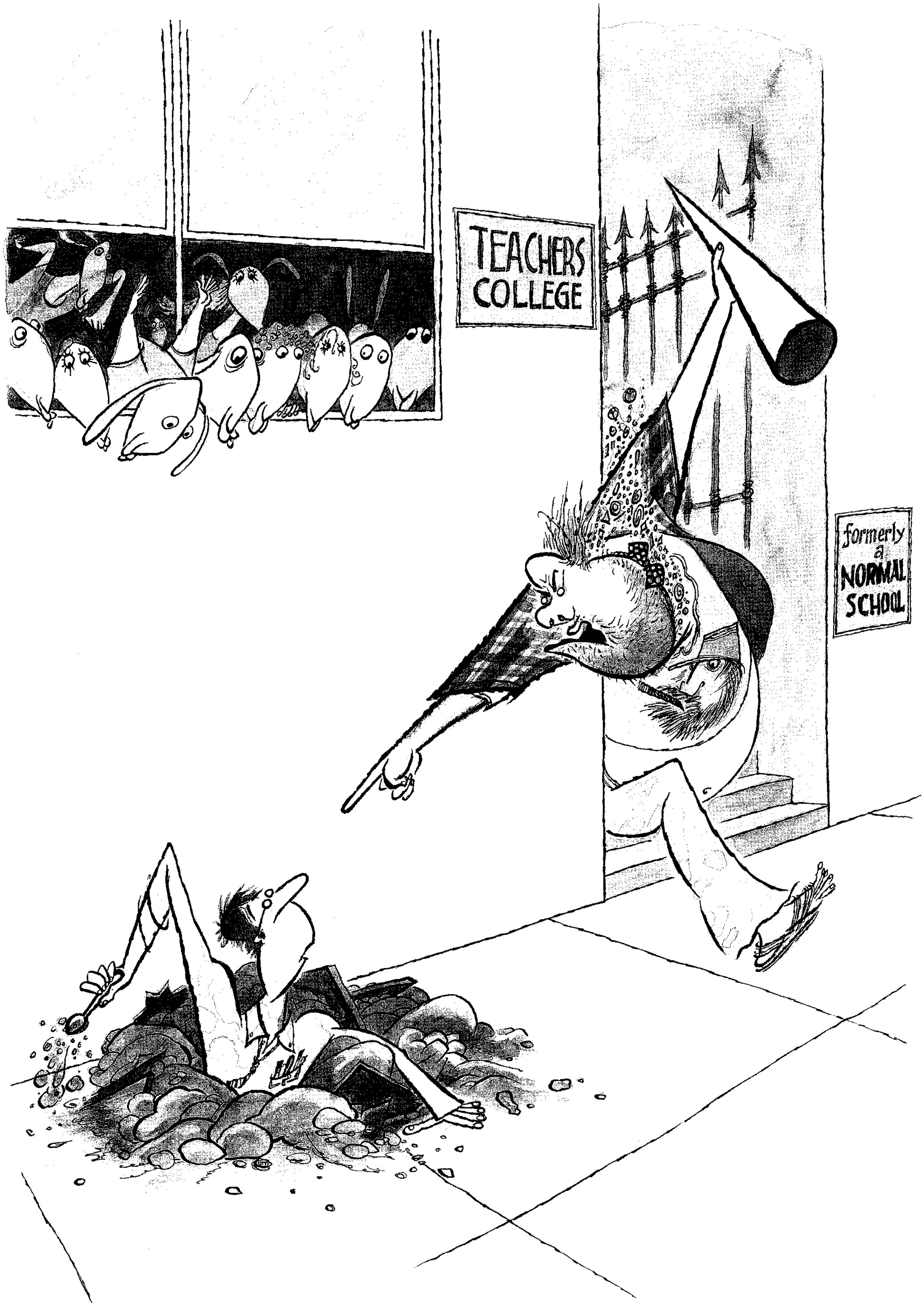
New York City teems with many more of these schools than any other district in the country. A handful have been around for years, including El Puente Academy for Peace and Justice, with its wacky hip-hop curriculum ("An F for Hip-Hop 101," Summer 1998). But Mayor Michael Bloomberg and schools chancellor Joel Klein's project to break up many of the system's dysfunctional large high schools and replace them with new small schools has spawned many more. The Department of Education's website lists at least 15 of the new small high schools that either are explicitly named as social justice schools or whose mission statements declare that their curricula center on social justice concerns. Curiously, while left-wing community organizations, including ultraradical Acorn, helped create some of these schools, some have also received funding from über-capitalist Bill Gates's charitable foundation. Lenin quipped that "a capitalist will sell you the rope to hang him with." Now it seems he just gives it to you.

Chancellor Klein sees no problem with social justice schools. "Giving schools 'leadership' or 'social justice' themes is fine with me, as long as the teachers and principals do not bring politics and ideologies into our classrooms," he told me—though of course that's just what ed schools instruct social justice teachers to do. "Themes don't drive school programs; state standards do. Our small secondary schools are academically rigorous. We cannot afford to vilify schools that help us accomplish our top goal as a school system: boosting our students' achievement and academic success."

Of course, the social justice schools have hardly been "vilified," or even scrutinized. They're worth a close look. With Chancellor Klein's approval, for example, Héctor Calderón recently became the new principal of El Puente Academy. Calderón immediately told an interviewer from the leftist education publication *Rethinking Schools* that he is a dedicated follower of—you guessed it—arch-anticapitalist Paolo Freire. His school, he says, now fully incorporates "the Freirian idea of education for liberation" through a comprehensive social justice curriculum that embraces all academic subjects, including math and science. Calderón declined to invite me to visit to see how his school teaches those subjects.

Another Freirian, Nancy Gannon, was recently recruited from the Leadership Academy, the city's training program for new principals, to start up the School for Democracy and Leadership, a Gates-funded school in Brooklyn's Crown Heights section. In announcing the school's opening in September 2004, Gannon declared that it "fulfills a long held belief that empowerment is the foundation of democracy. . . . In the words of Paolo Freire, an internationally acclaimed author and educational thought-leader, our goal is to create a 'pedagogy of hope.'"

Gannon, a Williams graduate in her late thirties, told me that she had seen the relevance of Freire's theories of a "liberating education" during her Peace Corps experience teaching in a poor village in northern Thailand and then later in a Baltimore school for former dropouts. All the members of Gannon's school-planning committee—parents, some prospective teachers, and community activists—read Freire's books on pedagogy during their deliberations about the school's mission and then decided to infuse the school with social justice projects. "We are incredibly steeped in activism," she says. "We encourage the students to pick something in the world or the community they want to change and then act on it together." She gave prospective teachers the same message. "Stop sitting on the sidelines feeling nauseous about the state of our world," she urged in a recruiting e-mail. "Jump in. Make a difference. . . . We're political, we're smart, we believe in the voice of youth and the power of activism and the need for us all to be the change we want to see in the world."


TEACHERS COLLEGE
formerly a NORMAL SCHOOL

Accordingly, students in the school's Education Activism group have put out a brochure saying that they are "committed to fighting against the injustice and inequality within our education system." They therefore support the Campaign for Fiscal Equity lawsuit against the state to secure more funding for New York City schools, and they call for "mandatory African-American history classes in all New York City public schools." And ninth-grade science teacher Jhumki Basu, inspired by Freire and by the teaching science for social justice approach of Teachers College's Calabrese Barton, told me that, as one way of making her students attentive to political and social justice issues around the world, she devised a three-week project in her physics class on the international controversy over Iran's nuclear program.

Another Gates-funded social justice high school, the Leadership Institute on Webster Avenue in the Bronx, illustrates some of the perils inherent in turning over schools to community groups with a political agenda. Three years in the making, the school is the brainchild of the radical Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition and its youth branch, Sistas and Brothas United. Almost inevitably, the school's mission statement is thoroughly Freirian in its pedagogy, assuming that teachers can enhance the academic achievement of disadvantaged children by giving them a voice through "leadership, community action and social justice." The school opened last September with 100 poor minority students and great hopes. When I visited recently, though, it was already clear that the idea of democratic empowerment for the students was subverting any hope for a rigorous education.

Principal Ron Gonzalez told me that the students learned at their first weekly Town Hall meeting this year that they could pick some policy or institution in the community that they believed should be changed and then work together on a "social action" project to bring about the change. Using the school's democratic decision-making process, the students decided that the most oppressive thing they could think of was the school's dress code (students initially had to wear brown or black slacks and a shirt with a collar) and other classroom regulations, and they quickly achieved the goal of changing the code. The school, having established that student democracy and engagement was its prime mission, was instantly hoist with its own petard.

The street culture of the students' tough Bronx neighborhoods seemed to pervade almost every class I visited. Kids wore ghetto garb, chewed gum, ate potato chips and drank soda pop, talked whenever they wanted to. Girls and boys sometimes snuggled up to each other. Students addressed one teacher as "hey mistah." The sense of order and decorum necessary for any serious academic effort had unraveled, and teachers and administrators seemed powerless to repair it. But students did engage in one other major social action this year, thus partially fulfilling the school's mission. They were bused up to Albany to participate in a day of lobbying organized by the teachers' union to persuade the legislature to appropriate the additional billions in school funds ordered by the courts in the CFE school finance case.

These schools are a perversion of an already misguided idea. Paolo Freire developed his liberation pedagogy out of his experiences teaching illiterate peasants in northeastern Brazil, whom he saw, understandably, as victims of an oppressive, semifeudal society. The traditional "banking" approach to education, as he called it, in which the teacher "deposits" socially approved knowledge into the minds of the oppressed but passive students, is the mechanism that "reproduces" that oppression. In response, Freire proposed instead a liberatory pedagogy, in which the poor students become democratic participants with their teachers as they learn a critical literacy that enables them to analyze the causes of their own oppression.

Whatever might be said about this theory in the context of rural Brazil in the 1950s, it is educational malpractice to apply it to the problem of educating minority children in New York City schools in the twenty-first century.

Throughout most of the twentieth century, the bad and oppressive "banking" approach that the city's public schools used somehow managed to lift millions of children out of poverty—something the social justice schools of today seem unlikely to do.

It cannot be repeated often enough: ideas have consequences, and bad ideas have bad consequences. The Freirian theories that carry over to social justice teaching are incapable of "liberating" the children of America's so-called oppressed. As E. D. Hirsch has exhaustively shown, the scientific evidence about which classroom methods produce the best results for poor children point conclusively to the very methods that the critical pedagogy and social justice theorists denounce as oppressive and racist. By contrast, not one shred of hard evidence suggests that the pedagogy behind teaching for social justice works to lift the academic achievement of poor and minority students.

Social justice teaching is a frivolous waste of precious school hours, grievously harmful to poor children, who start out with a disadvantage. School is the only place where they are likely to obtain the academic knowledge that could make up for the educational deprivation they suffer in their homes. The last thing they need is a wild-eyed experiment in education through social action.

So why do education professors who claim to care for the poor continue to agitate for instruction that holds back poor children? Either the professors are stupid (possible), or (more likely) they care more about their own anti-American, anticapitalist agendas than they do about the actual education of children. The literature of social justice education is obsessed with the allegedly "dark" side of American political, social, and economic life. Thus in a book about teaching for social justice, Arizona State University ed prof Carole Edelsky whines that she "thinks a lot about dark times—the Dark Ages, the Inquisition, the period of the Third Reich, the McCarthy years. Times when certain knowledge was banned and certain knowers were banished, persecuted, incarcerated, even killed." In one essay alone Maxine Greene writes that "We live after all in dark times," that this is a "peculiar and menacing time," and that "These are dark and shadowed times." A collection of essays edited by Bill Ayers and dedicated to Greene is called *A Light in Dark Times: Maxine Greene and the Unfinished Conversation*. In their ideologically induced paranoia about America, the radical education theorists, like most ideologues, cannot see what is right in front of their eyes—that America and democratic capitalism are actually doing very well, thank you, but that the children of the minority poor are getting a lousy education because of the education establishment, and that teaching for social justice provides no solutions.

Unfortunately, there is little chance that the hegemony of social justice teaching in the education schools can be challenged from within that hopelessly closed thought world. That being the case, elected officials will have to address the issue. After all, state legislatures are constitutionally empowered to regulate and oversee almost every aspect of K–12 education, including curriculum and the professional standards for teachers. At the very least, legislatures should be holding hearings to determine the extent to which the radical ideology of the education professors is leading to political indoctrination in public school classrooms and undermining the rights of all children to a solid academic and politics-free education.

They then ought to do something the critical pedagogy theorists accuse them of doing anyhow—reestablishing the hegemony of our open democratic society in the classroom. Bill Ayers has the academic freedom to say and write anything he wants about America and its schools. But academic freedom protects neither him nor the teachers he trains when they bring their leftist version of social justice into the schools. Legislators should ask their state education boards to write a new set of guidelines that discourage teaching for social justice and social justice schools and that forbid teachers from indoctrinating students with their own politics, whether left or right. This ought to be the teacher's Hippocratic Oath: to do no harm.

How the Schools Shortchange Boys

In the newly
feminized
classroom,
boys tune out.

Gerry Garibaldi

Since I started teaching several years ago, after 25 years in the movie business, I've come to learn firsthand that everything I'd heard about the feminization of our schools is real—and far more pernicious to boys than I had imagined. Christina Hoff Sommers was absolutely accurate in describing, in her 2000 bestseller, *The War Against Boys,* how feminist complaints that girls were "losing their voice" in a male-oriented classroom have prompted the educational establishment to turn the schools upside down to make them more girl-friendly, to the detriment of males.

As a result, boys have become increasingly disengaged. Only 65 percent earned high school diplomas in the class of 2003, compared with 72 percent of girls, education researcher Jay Greene recently documented. Girls now so outnumber boys on most university campuses across the country that some schools, like Kenyon College, have even begun to practice affirmative action for boys in admissions. And as in high school, girls are getting better grades and graduating at a higher rate.

As Sommers understood, it is boys' aggressive and rationalist nature—redefined by educators as a behavioral disorder—that's getting so many of them in trouble in the feminized schools. Their problem: they don't want to be girls.

HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

Today's schools devalue boys' pluck and courage . . .

DAN DARE
RAY GUN

Take my tenth-grade student Brandon. I noted that he was on the no-pass list again, after three consecutive days in detention for being disruptive. "Who gave it to you this time?" I asked, passing him on my way out.

"Waverly," he muttered into the long folding table.

"What for?"

"Just asking a question," he replied.

"No," I corrected him. "You said"—and here I mimicked his voice—"'Why do we have to do this *crap* anyway?' Right?"

Brandon recalls one of those sweet, ruby-cheeked boys you often see depicted on English porcelain. He's smart, precocious, and—according to his special-education profile—has been "behaviorally challenged" since fifth grade. The special-ed classification is the bane of the modern boy. To teachers, it's a yellow flag that snaps out at you the moment you open a student's folder. More than any other factor, it has determined Brandon's and legions of other boys' troubled tenures as students.

"Boys will pin you to the wall like a moth. They want a rational explanation for *everything*."

Brandon's current problem began because Ms. Waverly, his social studies teacher, failed to answer one critical question: What was the point of the lesson she was teaching? One of the first observations I made as a teacher was that boys invariably ask this question, while girls seldom do. When a teacher assigns a paper or a project, girls will obediently flip their notebooks open and jot down the due date. Teachers love them. God loves them. Girls are calm and pleasant. They succeed through cooperation.

Boys will pin you to the wall like a moth. They want a rational explanation for *everything*. If unconvinced by your reasons—or if you don't bother to offer any—they slouch contemptuously in their chairs, beat their pencils, or watch the squirrels outside the window. Two days before the paper is due, girls are handing in the finished product in neat vinyl folders with colorful clip-art title pages. It isn't until the boys notice this that the alarm sounds. "Hey, you never told us 'bout a paper! What paper?! I want to see my fucking counselor!"

A female teacher, especially if she has no male children of her own, I've noticed, will tend to view boys' penchant for challenging classroom assignments as disruptive, disrespectful—rude. In my experience, notes home and parent-teacher conferences almost always concern a boy's behavior in class, usually centering on this kind of conflict. In today's feminized classroom, with its "cooperative learning" and "inclusiveness," a student's demand for assurance of a worthwhile outcome for his effort isn't met with a reasonable explanation but is considered inimical to the educational process. Yet it's this very trait, innate to boys and men, that helps explain male success in the hard sciences, math, and business.

The difference between the male and female predilection for hard proof shows up among the teachers, too. In my second year of teaching, I attended a required seminar on "differentiated instruction," a teaching model that is the current rage in the fickle world of pop education theory. The method addresses the need to teach *all* students in a classroom where academic abilities vary greatly—where there is "heterogeneous grouping," to use the ed-school jargon—meaning kids with IQs of 55 sit side by side with the gifted. The theory goes that the "least restrictive environment" is best for helping the intellectually challenged. The teacher's job is to figure out how to dice up his daily

. . . and positively dislike their challenging aggressiveness.

CHRIS WARE/KEYSTONE FEATURES/GETTY IMAGES

lessons to address every perceived shortcoming and disability in the classroom.

After the lecture, we broke into groups of five, with instructions to work cooperatively to come up with a model lesson plan for just such a classroom situation. My group had two men and three women. The women immediately set to work; my seasoned male cohort and I reclined sullenly in our chairs.

"Are the women going to do all the work?" one of the women inquired brightly after about ten minutes.

"This is baloney," my friend declared, yawning, as he chucked the seminar handout into a row of empty plastic juice bottles. "We wouldn't have this problem if we grouped kids by ability, like we used to."

The women, all dedicated teachers, understood this, too. But that wasn't the point. Treating people as equals was a social goal well worth pursuing. And we contentious boys were just too dumb to get it.

Female approval has a powerful effect on the male psyche. Kindness, consideration, and elevated moral purpose have nothing to do with an irreducible proof, of course. Yet we male teachers squirm when women point out our moral failings—and our boy students do, too. This is the virtue that has helped women redefine the mission of education.

The notion of male ethical inferiority first arises in grammar school, where women make up the overwhelming majority of teachers. It's here that the alphabet soup of supposed male dysfunctions begins. And make no mistake: while girls occasionally exhibit symptoms of male-related disorders in this world, females diagnosed with learning disabilities simply don't exist.

For a generation now, many well-meaning parents, worn down by their boy's failure to flourish in school, his poor self-esteem and unhappiness, his discipline problems, decide to accept administration recommendations to have him tested for disabilities. The pitch sounds reasonable: admission into special ed qualifies him for tutoring, modified lessons, extra time on tests (including the SAT), and other supposed benefits. It's all a hustle, Mom and Dad privately advise their boy. Don't worry about it. We know there's nothing wrong with you.

To get into special ed, however, administrators must find something wrong. In my four years of teaching, I've never seen them fail. In the first IEP (Individualized Educational Program) meeting, the boy and his parents learn the results of disability testing. When the boy hears from three smiling adults that he does indeed have a learning disability, his young face quivers like Jell-O. For him, it was never a hustle. From then on, however, his expectations of himself—and those of his teachers—plummet.

Special ed is the great spangled elephant in the education parade. Each year, it grows larger and more lumbering, drawing more and more boys into the procession. Since the publication of Sommers's book, it has grown tenfold. Special ed now is the single largest budget item, outside of basic operations, in most school districts across the country.

Special-ed boosters like to point to the success that boys enjoy after they begin the program. Their grades rise, and the phone calls home cease. Anxious parents feel reassured that progress is happening. In truth, I have rarely seen any real improvement in a student's performance after he's become a special-ed kid. On my first day of teaching, I received manila folders for all five of my special-ed students—boys all—with a score of modifications that I had to make in each day's lesson plan.

I noticed early on that my special-ed boys often sat at their desks with their heads down or casually staring off into space, as if tracking motes in their eyes, while I proceeded with my lesson. A special-ed caseworker would arrive, take their assignments, and disappear with the boys into the resource room. The students would return the next day with completed assignments.

"Did you do this yourself?" I'd ask, dubious.

They assured me that they did. I became suspicious, however, when I noticed that they

Cooperation, not competition or individual achievement, rules today's classroom.

H. ARMSTRONG ROBERTS/RETROFILE/GETTY IMAGES

couldn't perform the same work on their own, away from the resource room. A special-ed caseworker's job is to keep her charges from failing. A failure invites scrutiny and reams of paperwork. The caseworkers do their jobs.

Brandon has been on the special-ed track since he was nine. He knows his legal rights as well as his caseworkers do. And he plays them ruthlessly. In every debate I have with him about his low performance, Brandon delicately threads his response with the very sinews that bind him. After a particularly easy midterm, I made him stay after class to explain his failure.

"An 'F'?!" I said, holding the test under his nose.

"You were supposed to modify that test," he countered coolly. "I only had to answer nine of the 27 questions. The nine I did are all right."

His argument is like a piece of fine crystal that he rolls admiringly in his hand. He demands that I appreciate the elegance of his position. I do, particularly because my own is so weak.

Yet while the process of education may be deeply absorbing to Brandon, he long ago came to dismiss the content entirely. For several decades, white Anglo-Saxon males—Brandon's ancestors—have faced withering assault from feminism- and multiculturalism-inspired education specialists. Armed with a spiteful moral rectitude, their goal is to sever his historical reach, to defame, cover over, dilute . . . and then reconstruct.

In today's politically correct textbooks, Nikki Giovanni and Toni Morrison stand shoulder-to-shoulder with Mark Twain, William Faulkner, and Charles Dickens, even though both women are second-raters at best. But even in their superficial aspects, the textbooks advertise publishers' intent to pander to the prevailing PC attitudes. The books feature page after page of healthy, exuberant young girls in winning portraits. Boys (white boys in particular) will more often than not be shunted to the background in photos or be absent entirely or appear sitting in wheelchairs.

The underlying message isn't lost on Brandon. His keen young mind reads between the lines and perceives the folly of all that he's told to accept. Because he lacks an adult perspective, however, what he cannot grasp is the ruthlessness of the war that the education reformers have waged. Often when he provokes, it's simple boyish tit for tat.

A week ago, I dispatched Brandon to the library with directions to choose a book for his novel assignment. He returned minutes later with his choice and a twinkling smile.

"I got a grrreat book, Mr. Garibaldi!" he said, holding up an old, bleary, clothbound item. "Can I read the first page aloud, *pahlease*?"

My mind buzzed like a fly, trying to discover some hint of mischief.

"Who's the author?"

"Ah, Joseph Conrad," he replied, consulting the frontispiece. "Can I? Huh, huh, huh?"

"I guess so."

Brandon eagerly stood up before the now-alert class of mostly black and Puerto Rican faces, adjusted his shoulders as if straightening a prep-school blazer, then intoned solemnly: "*The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*"—twinkle, twinkle, twinkle. "Chapter one. . . ."

Merry mayhem ensued. Brandon had one of his best days of the year.

Boys today feel isolated and outgunned, but many, like Brandon, don't lack pluck and courage. They often seem to have more of it than their parents, who writhe uncomfortably before a system steeled in the armor of "social conscience." The game, parents whisper to themselves, is to play along, to maneuver, to outdistance your rival. Brandon's struggle is an honest one: to preserve truth and his own integrity.

Boys who get a compartment on the special-ed train take the ride to its end without looking out the window. They wait for the moment when they can step out and scorn the rattletrap that took them nowhere. At the end of the line, some, like Brandon, may have forged the resiliency of survival. But that's not what school is for.

Is There a New York Housing Crisis?

Only when government creates one—as Mayor Bloomberg is doing now.

Nicole Gelinas

Gotham hasn't had a functional housing market in nearly a century, because generations of New York politicians, confusing rational housing policy with utopian social policy, won't trust the market to do its job. But right now, New York has a historic chance to loosen the government stranglehold that has kept the forces of supply and demand from allocating housing resources. The reason: the government policy responsible for so much harm over the years, rent regulation, will slowly wither and die if left alone. Just as important, the resurgence of Gotham's neighborhoods beginning in the 1990s means that a healthy free market would strive to meet demand for housing nearly all over New York, not just in a few safe enclaves.

But Mayor Bloomberg won't unleash the market. Instead, through his New Housing Marketplace program, he'll thwart it by further building or "preserving" 165,000 units of "affordable" housing—a plan that will keep rent regulation alive well past its scheduled demise. Just as bad, he'll prolong Gotham's ill-starred twentieth-century attempt to achieve an impossible social goal: tip-top housing for the poor. However well-intentioned this plan, a look at the city's dismal history of housing intervention shows that past efforts to do good by thwarting market and social forces—from implementing strict rent controls to constructing acres of public housing—helped nearly kill New York.

And the plan raises one further question: How much intervention is sufficient? A close analysis shows that the city can never build enough "affordable" housing. The logical end to Bloomberg's New Housing Marketplace is city control and allocation of all of New York's housing resources, public and private.

Bloomberg envisions a mammoth government role in housing because, like generations of his predecessors, he confuses housing policy with other issues. As he says, "We view the production of affordable housing not only as one of the urgent social needs of our time, but also as a sound economic investment for the future." What's more, he's no believer in letting the market do its job, in housing or anything else—as witness his emphasis on large-scale subsidized projects, like the planned Bruce Ratner basketball stadium in Brooklyn and the failed West Side football stadium in Manhattan.

But instead of creating the utopia the mayor envisions for the city's working-class and middle-class citizens, Bloomberg's top-down government housing plan, because it contorts the market to provide housing benefits to a comparative few, will drive up housing costs for millions of working-class and middle-class New Yorkers who don't win city-subsidized apartments. And the cost of maintaining the city's vast housing bureaucracy further burdens these taxpayers: as Bloomberg once put it, New York companies shouldn't complain about paying the high taxes, since they really amount to a justified "luxury" premium for the "luxury product" of being in Gotham. Through high housing costs and high taxes for anyone living or investing in New York without benefit of city subsidies, Bloomberg fulfills his own prophecy: he creates a city where middle-class jobs and housing are scarcer than they need be.

Of course, twentieth-century New York never trusted the market to do the straightforward job of housing its citizens. Gotham's strict rent-regulation regime, in fact, commonly thought a legacy of World War II price caps, was really born in 1920, after the city underwent a post–World War I housing shortage. Foreshadowing generations of militant tenant activists to come, veterans, housewives, old folks, and union laborers held "mass meetings" to protest "rent profiteers" and demand rent-increase caps, convincing then-mayor John "Red Mike" Hylan that "the law of supply and demand should not apply so far as the renting situation [is] concerned," as the *New York Times* reported. Hylan was easy to convince: his distrust of market forces was so sweeping that he also refused to allow subway operators to hike their nickel fare to keep up with inflation, plunging them into eventual bankruptcy and a municipal takeover.

The tales from the *Times* about rent control in the Roaring Twenties would be at home in today's papers. As temporary "emergency" rent laws periodically threatened to expire, renters and landlords squared off, with tenant activists and their captive politicians crying that renters like "Mrs. Hannah K. Tence, . . . a frail old woman, the sole support of two children," would be kicked to the curb without a blanket of rent regulations covering the city, and landlords warning that "the hysterical present rent laws" were thwarting the maintenance of old buildings and the construction of new ones.

Gotham won a respite from what would later become a never-ending political and financial battle when then-governor Al Smith allowed rent restrictions to expire gradually before the Great Depression. But a little more than a decade later, New York got its permanent rent-control regime, when Washington mandated wartime price caps at the city's request. As the feds extricated themselves after World War II ended, Albany and Gotham took over again.

Six decades later, rent regulation continues to thwart what would otherwise be a thriving market. Gotham and Albany regulate the rents of 1.1 million apartments, insulating fully half the city's rental stock and nearly a third of its total of homes from market forces. For most regulated apartments, the city sets annual rental increases for renewal leases under state law and allows for larger, but not market-rate, increases for most vacated apartments. (Vacant apartments escape regulation only when they reach $2,000 a month, and occupied apartments escape when they reach the $2,000 ceiling and their landlords can prove that their tenants consistently earn over $175,000 a year.)

But rent regulation isn't a rational, necessary protection for low-income and middle-income New Yorkers, as its advocates claim. Data culled from the 2002 census for *City Journal* by Alan Salzberg of Quantitative Analysis, Inc. bear out what many suspect: although most New York renters live under rent regulation, most of the benefit goes to a comparative few who live in the richest neighborhoods and have remained in their apartments for decades. In Greenwich Village, for example, most regulated tenants surveyed by the census paid $600 to $1,600 a month, depending on the original rental prices, capital improvements approved by government officials, and the number of years the tenants had lived in their apartments. By contrast, a "free-market" tenant, because that "free market" is so supply-constricted, paid $1,500 to $3,400. On the Upper West Side, a free-market renter might

Gotham's stupendous building boom . . .

JAMES LEYNSE/CORBIS

have paid $1,900 to $3,400, while a regulated tenant paid $600 to $1,700.

But in the city's middle-class neighborhoods, the difference between regulated and market units is less than $200 a month: the regulated tenant in Astoria might have paid $800 in 2002, according to the census data, while the free-market tenant paid $1,000. In Flatbush, a free-market tenant might have paid $850, while a regulated tenant paid $690. In Riverdale, free-market apartments commanded about $936, compared with regulated units' $700. In Throgs Neck, free-market apartments commanded about $750, while regulated rents ran about $625.

Despite the fact that most tenants see such a relatively modest financial benefit from regulation, Manhattan-based tenant activists succeed because they've got every grandmother in Bay Ridge believing that her landlord would hike her rent from $800 to $3,000 if New York jettisoned regulation. The most fascinating true-life tales of rent regulation that pop up in the press every now and then don't help to dispel this popular notion, as witness screenwriter Nora Ephron's recent *New Yorker* article about how she moved into a five-bedroom apartment in the storied Apthorp on the Upper West Side in 1980 and stayed there for 24 years, paying one-third the true market rent.

Rather than cocooning most tenants in such gilded elegance on the cheap, rent regulation more often cages working-class and middle-class tenants in declining apartments for decades, harming landlords, tenants, and New York's real stock of affordable housing, as well. Many tenants live in the worst of both worlds: their regulated rent isn't low enough to provide the massive subsidy that regulated residents of rich neighborhoods enjoy, but it's low enough to discourage them from moving on, freeing up larger spaces for families. Meanwhile, though, it's also low enough to discourage their landlords from maintaining their apartments above the minimum required.

In fact, rent regulation makes it impossible for many landlords to keep their buildings in good condition, even if they wanted to, as some numbers will demonstrate. The average landlord with no commercial tenants reports spending about $599 per apartment each month on heating, water, taxes, insurance, and the like, according to the city's finance department. But this figure does not include what he must pay to finance the mortgage on the building. After that, "what's left over to turn a profit is really very thin" in many cases, says Jack Freund of the Rent Stabilization Association, a landlords' lobby. If a landlord carries $25,000 in debt per apartment, he pays an additional $158 or so a month for that apartment's share of the mortgage.

After collecting the city's median regulated rent of $855, the landlord nets only $98 or so per apartment each month. That means each year, the landlord has, if all goes well, $35,000 available for a 30-unit apartment building for capital expenses, new investments, and profit (subject, of course, to income tax).

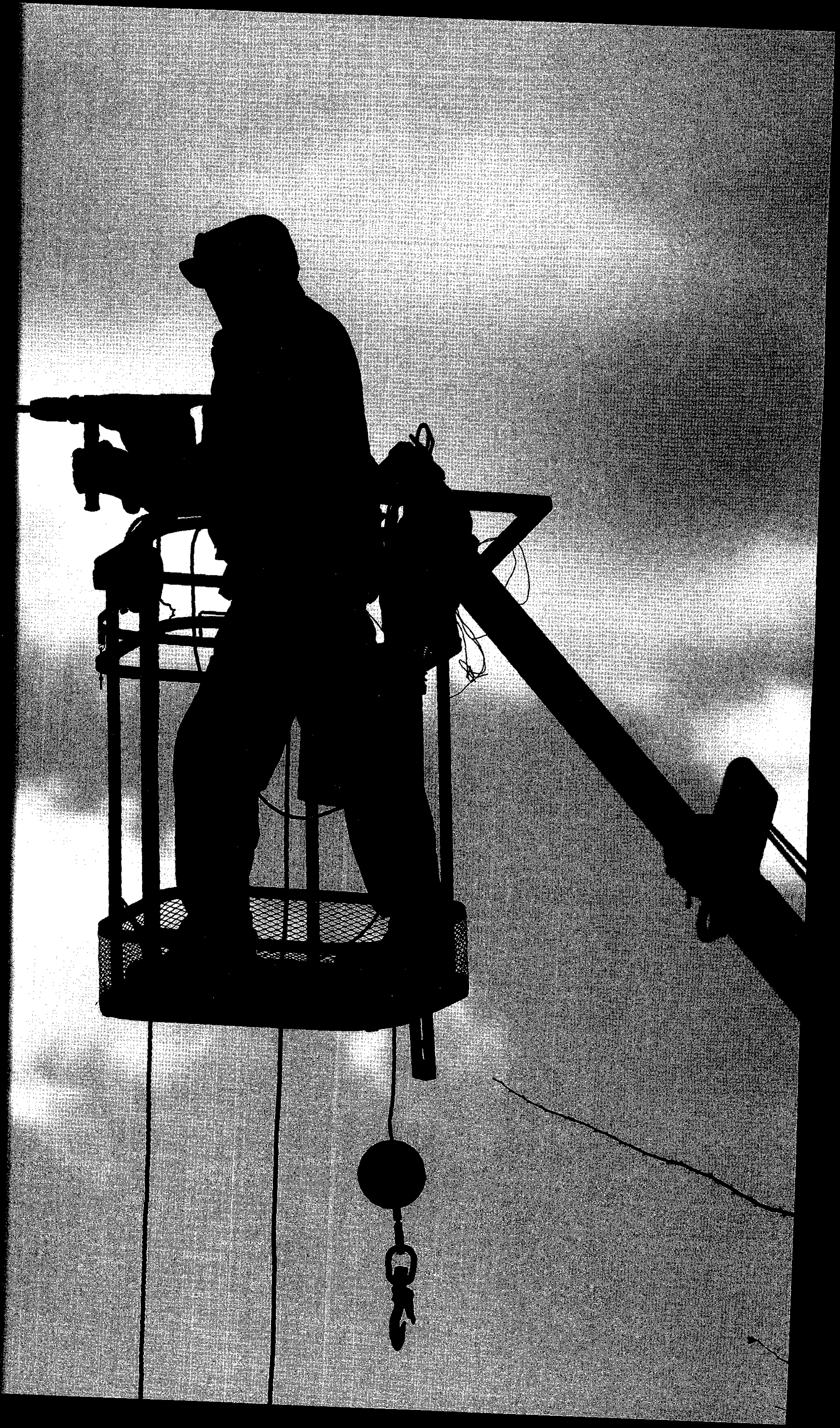
These figures may seem workable—even, as the tenants' advocates insist, generous. But they hold only for a landlord who collects the median citywide rent, while keeping costs and debt down; change one of those wildly variable variables, and the landlord is in trouble. In reality, half of regulated apartments rent for lower than the median rate, and 20 percent—200,000—rent for less than $600. And these apartments don't necessarily carry the lowest costs: if a landlord owns a fixer-upper in a marginal neighborhood, where tenants sometimes don't pay their low rents on time or even at all, he quickly could find his building in disrepair.

"We are always falling behind," says Ken Haron of Artimus Construction, a Harlem builder and landlord. "Rents don't change as fast as costs change." Further, due to the pro-tenant bias of New York's courts, says Haron, if just three of, say, 20 tenants are not paying their rent, or are damaging the building, "it takes three years to get them out. The other 17 lose their services, because you cannot keep up the building."

As a result, Gotham's finance department considers nearly 12 percent of buildings in New

. . . gives city hall a chance to let the market work its magic . . .

BO ZAUNDERS/CORBIS



York to be "distressed" due to high costs and low income—nearly double the 6 percent found in 1999—because landlords cannot pass through the skyrocketing fuel costs and taxes to their tenants. Further, a landlord who is not officially "distressed" but faces a double-digit increase in fuel costs one winter but a single-digit rent increase is tempted to defer necessary work until the good times arrive. And since regulations encourage tenants to stay in one place, satisfied or not, landlords don't have a financial motivation to keep buildings in tip-top shape, even if their rents give them enough cash to do so.

In addition to rent regulation, Gotham's acres of high-rise public housing loom as another durable example of how pols long ago set out to achieve a working-class and middle-class housing utopia and instead ended up almost killing the city. New York built its nearly 200,000 public-housing apartments beginning in the thirties, beneficently intending to give deserving working-class families an escape from what experts considered to be obsolete slum housing, and to benefit society as well by removing "pressure upon the slum child," which would supposedly cut juvenile delinquency and crime in working-class neighborhoods, as the *Times* put it in 1934. Aiming to promote racial harmony, too, New York chose its project tenants on a colorblind basis starting in 1939, and proudly boasted of how black and white children "played a big part of welding the white and Negro families together" at the projects, as one academic put it in 1950.

The city had an economic rationale for building its housing projects, as well—the same one Bloomberg offers for subsidizing affordable housing today: it was supposedly an economic investment in the city's working class. In 1934, unions representing more than half a million workers pushed Gotham to treat housing as a "public enterprise" akin to transportation and education, and the city obliged.

But in a span of 17 years between the fifties and sixties (when some of the largest projects were built), the cheerful *Times* headlines lauding that "New York City's public housing projects demonstrate that Negroes and whites can live together as good neighbors" had turned into hysterical headlines screaming BROWNSVILLE SINKS IN DECAY AND FEAR. Why?

First, city and state officials utterly destroyed existing neighborhoods before rebuilding them, razing block after block and sometimes leaving the land vacant for years before work began. Second, because officials carefully screened the first generation of housing-project tenants to choose tenants likely to maintain successful households, they took away the best tenants from struggling private landlords, pushing working-class neighborhoods and buildings further into disrepair. Third, Gotham began to muddle its intentions: Was public policy intended to help the working poor to better themselves, or was it intended to achieve radical social justice? In the sixties, New York's goal shifted from uplifting working-class New Yorkers in carefully planned new environments to maintaining permanent poverty there. The projects and their surrounding neighborhoods became crime-ridden wastelands, since no New Yorker with an option to live somewhere else wants to live with a dysfunctional underclass.

Further, government "solutions" to the ills of the projects only exacerbated those problems. In the seventies, the feds switched from constructing housing projects in cities to giving individual tenants personal Section 8 vouchers for rent money, theorizing that tenants would thrive if the government let them escape the high-rise projects and live in privately run low-rise buildings. Instead, thousands of New Yorkers armed with the new vouchers forced working-class tenants out of fragile neighborhoods, capturing more such neighborhoods for the permanent poor.

In the end, the city's twentieth-century vision of decent low-income housing ended up creating a nightmarish worst-of-both-worlds instead. The projects became desolate breeders of crime and squalor; the underclass neighborhoods around them crumbled, as the working class and the middle class scrambled to get as far away as possible. Add in the city's negligent pre-Giuliani-era policing, which let junkies and landlords torch buildings with impunity, and it's no surprise that the market simply abandoned 200,000 apartments, leaving 65 percent of Central Harlem and entire swaths of Brooklyn and the Bronx to drug-addled squatters.

But when New York's leaders surveyed the moonscape of abandonment in the mid-eighties, they came away not with an understanding of how much damage government intervention had done to New York's neighborhoods but only with a renewed belief that the free housing market couldn't work here. It followed that then-mayor Ed Koch's solution was yet more government intervention: $7.7 billion (in today's dollars) to rebuild neighborhoods destroyed by generations of government policy just as effectively as Hurricane Katrina destroyed New Orleans.

> **“Pols set out to achieve a working- and middle-class housing utopia and instead ended up almost killing the city.”**

The good news is that Mayor Bloomberg has an unprecedented opportunity today to liberate Gotham's housing market from its dismal legacy of government control. The city is in the midst of a spectacular housing boom—part of a global fever for real estate in or near world-class cities, and still percolating as of this writing. Just since 1998, New York's rate of residential construction has nearly quadrupled, with permits filed for more than 30,000 new units last year, the highest level since 1972. And this time around, the boom is diffuse: in 2005, builders filed more permits to build in the Bronx, in Brooklyn, and in Queens than in Manhattan, contrary to the historical trend. And because former mayor Giuliani's activist policing made even some of New York's most crime-infested neighborhoods safer, upper-middle-class renters and affluent buyers have pushed development into areas like Central Harlem and Bed-Stuy, while luxury apartment–dwellers now populate neighborhoods like the Lower East Side, Chelsea, and Red Hook, reviving areas that once languished in the shadow of the housing projects.

While working-class and middle-class New Yorkers can't afford many of these new homes, the building boom would nevertheless be good news for them if New York's market worked properly. As upper-middle-class New Yorkers vacated their older apartments for newer ones, the middle class could move into the best of the city's older housing stock, freeing up *their* old apartments for yet more middle-class residents, and so on down the income ladder.

And because rent regulation is slowly loosening its stranglehold, due to the nineties legislation that pulls most vacant apartments off the rolls once their rents reach $2,000, this turnover is poised to happen, albeit painfully slowly, as some apartments won't advance to the $2,000 deregulation point for two decades. Further, landlords who once thrived by warehousing Section 8 voucher tenants are finding that they finally can attract unsubsidized tenants now that middle-class New Yorkers again want to enter once-decayed neighborhoods that used to be unofficially reserved for government clients.

But the bad news is that Bloomberg won't let the market heal. Indeed, through New Housing Marketplace, he'll inflict more pain, by further thwarting basic economics.

Bloomberg's scheme works like this: he'll offer cheap to free land or tax-exempt debt, or both, to developers—nonprofit and for-profit—to build 92,000 new apartments and homes for low- and middle-income residents, with a special emphasis on developers who agree to build "mixed-income" developments that mingle market-rate residents with subsidized moderate- and low-income ones. For one recent spate of 26 projects planned for Harlem, the Bronx, and

Brooklyn, the city chose groups ranging from the for-profit Yuco Real Estate Co. to a partnership that includes NY Acorn Housing Co., part of the radical Acorn activist group.

The city also will continue to award developers tax breaks for building in rich neighborhoods, or in some cases will let them erect denser buildings than code allows, if they set aside a percentage of their apartments for subsidized tenants. Further, the city will directly build some housing itself, on public land. In addition to new construction, the city will

The Just-Wait Solution to Gotham's Housing "Crisis"

Gothamites have complained about housing costs for generations. But for half a decade, home prices haven't been just high; they've been unjustifiably high and increasing at an unsustainable clip. The solution is not to throw money at "affordable" housing but to wait.

The best data come from Yale economics prof Robert Shiller, cocreator of the Case-Shiller Home Price Indices. Since the late eighties, Shiller has tracked successive sales of single-family homes in and around ten cities, including the metro areas and commuting corridors of New York, Boston, Washington, Chicago, L.A., Las Vegas, Miami, and San Francisco.

Shiller's charts since 2000 tell the story: in six years, home prices more than doubled, after having risen only 60 percent in the 13 years from 1987 to 1999. Across the ten regions, the same home that sold for, say, $300,000 in early 2000 sold for $669,450 by the end of 2005. Around Las Vegas, a person who paid $300,000 in 2000 could have sold the same home for $695,820 six years later. Around Boston, the sale price would have been $528,840; around San Francisco, $646,680; and, of course, around New York, $640,350.

This surge is unprecedented: the only period that came close occurred after World War II, when returning servicemen got married, ignited the baby boom, and moved to the suburbs. "But that was much more of a fundamental event than what we have now," Shiller said in a June press conference. "It's surprising that we're having this boom now. . . . If you look at the . . . fundamentals," including building costs, population increases, and interest rates, "none of those really explains [it]. . . . [T]hey're not *that* strong." Nor is the price surge due to the appeal of city living: New York's index, for example, includes counties as far away as New Haven, Connecticut, and Pike, Pennsylvania.

Signs of a speculative bubble abound: in May, the Chicago Mercantile Exchange launched futures contracts based on Shiller's index, in effect monetizing the fear among some investors that this fever won't last. (Through the futures contracts, homebuilders and mortgage lenders can hedge their liabilities in the event of a downturn by "betting" that the market will fall, thereby limiting their losses if it does.) Further, prices have begun to decline in bellwether cities like Boston, and Shiller notes that the sales volume of both existing and newly built homes peaked last year.

Some economists predict a "soft landing," because people can't dump their homes as readily as they dumped tech stocks when that bubble burst in 2000. But sellers don't determine what kind of "landing" the market has. Will buyers go along with sellers' bubble-era prices when they see that the inventory of homes for sale grows as sellers hold out?

Sure, some sellers have discretion as to whether they'll take a buyer's price—but many don't. Speculators who bought only for a quick "flip" would lose money every day in a downturn if they couldn't cover mortgages with rental income, for one.

When the real-estate market regains sanity, part of the "affordability" crisis will be solved. New York renters who can't afford a one-bedroom could find themselves looking at newly "affordable" two-bedrooms as the market struggles to absorb new construction, for example, while families who can't afford homes in their parents' neighborhoods on Long Island could have newfound choices. Market forces can do what Bloomberg can't.

"preserve" 73,000 units of existing subsidized housing, by offering landlords and co-op associations cheap financing for renovations if they pledge to maintain their buildings' "affordability," by offering tenants financing to buy and renovate their apartments at below-market prices, and by directing future federal tax credits to preserving old housing.

> "Mayor Bloomberg continues to subsidize the behavior of the permanent underclass through subsidized housing."

While the city extols itself for "harnessing the private market to create affordable housing," the mayor's plan only reasserts and expands the same strict controls over large swaths of Gotham's housing that have so harmed the city in the past. Almost incredibly, the plan will reinvigorate rent regulation. Most of the nearly 117,000 "affordable" rental apartments that the mayor will subsidize will fall under the city's permanent rent-regulation regime, which Department of Housing Preservation and Development deputy commissioner for development Rafael Cestero told me is still "the primary mechanism for ensuring long-term affordability." Indeed, largely due to the mayor's building program, even while the number of older rent-stabilized units fell by 28,000 between 2002 and 2005, the number of *new* rent-stabilized units rose by 29,000.

In prolonging this peculiar institution, Bloomberg forces "market-rate" residents of new mixed-income buildings, in which unregulated apartments may command $2,400 but identical "affordable" apartments rent for $600, to fork over higher prices to subsidize their neighbors. Take the Aspen, for instance, a new mixed-income rental building in Harlem, built by BFC Partners, which set aside nearly half the 238 apartments as "affordable" for prospective households earning as little as $25,000 to as much as $155,000, while it rented the rest at "market" rates. But as one individual who worked on the project noted, "It leads to a difficult scenario with neighbors with the same income with significant disparities in rent," since some middle-income renters—workers earning, say, $100,000 for a family of four—who don't win the "affordable" lottery opt to rent market units, effectively subsidizing everyone else. Such disparities also raise the specter of a wholesale reregulation of rents if, in a time of high inflation, middle-class "market" renters face double-digit hikes while their neighbors are protected.

Second, in addition to keeping rent regulation alive, the city's plan to build some housing itself, rather than bid it out to developers, will break new ground in ensuring that new "affordable" apartments remain off-limits to the private market forever, not just for a very long time. Bloomberg will create a public-sector company to build thousands of apartments near existing public housing on Manhattan's West Side, most to be rented or sold to New York families who earn between $50,000 and $100,000 a year.

Third, to ensure a steady supply of land now that it has successfully sold off its inventory of thousands of repossessed buildings, Gotham will create a "land bank" to buy private or public property (owned by state agencies, for example) to develop it or transfer it to third parties for "affordable" development. As Cestero told me, the city "might want to compete with the private sector" if that private sector wants to build luxury townhouses instead. The result: buildable land will grow even scarcer, costlier, and more heavily taxed.

In addition to thwarting economics, Bloomberg repeats the social mistakes whose lessons are cruelly etched in the city's landscape. Though Gotham no longer builds low-income housing projects, Mayor Bloomberg continues to subsidize the behavior of the permanent underclass through subsidized housing. The nonprofit Abyssinian Development Corporation, for example, has built 1,000 affordable units in Harlem over 15 years in various government partnerships, and is eager to build or renovate more in partnership with Bloomberg (the group won one large-scale government project nearly two years ago). But when I asked ADC's Zanetta Addams-Pilgrim if it was important that ADC's tenants work, she told me that "if a woman is pregnant or if she has five children, working is not something she's going to be doing."

Such subsidy for the dysfunctional underclass doesn't confront the real problem of the culture of single motherhood that afflicts so many poor communities. Yet none of the nonprofit representatives with whom I spoke considered single motherhood to be a problem. When I asked if they used their housing programs to try to encourage family formation, for example, answers ranged from "this infringes on their privacy" to earnest lectures on how lack of jobs and poor schools hurt poor children more than absent fathers.

Unlike ADC, for-profit developers don't have ideological reasons to choose dependent tenants; in fact, they valiantly try to do the opposite. The developers whom the city chooses to build affordable housing have some leeway to choose their tenants, provided they fall within strict income bands and are selected for initial consideration on a random basis. Developers consider choosing the "best" low-income tenants to be so vital to their mixed-income projects that consultants hold entire seminars on the topic.

Artimus's Haron, who builds "affordable" apartments through city programs, has an economic reason to choose his tenants well: if his low-income residents exhibit underclass behavior, he can't command high market rates at his unregulated units to subsidize them. Those developers who choose imperfectly run a very real risk for themselves and for the city, particularly in still-marginal neighborhoods like Central Harlem and East New York, from which some market-rate tenants might flee if a downturn affords them other options. Because landlords cannot easily evict bad tenants, just a few working-poor mothers who look good on paper but who raise unsupervised children who grow up to terrorize buildings and neighborhoods could ruin a building by prompting tenants who can leave to do so.

The worst part of Bloomberg's plan is: it never ends. More than 70 years and untold billions of dollars since Housing Authority chairman Langdon Post confidently noted that it would take $1.5 billion to end New York's housing crisis, New York is still just getting started.

The sheer number of New Yorkers who theoretically qualify for "affordable" housing demolishes Bloomberg's rationale for building it. In Bloomberg's New York, nearly 1.7 million families, or 5.7 million people—a full 92 percent of New Yorkers who identify themselves as families, or pretty much every single family in the city besides Bloomberg's—would qualify for city-controlled housing, as some numbers will show.

Of Bloomberg's 165,000 "affordable" homes, he'll build 112,200 for New York families earning less than $50,240. The problem: this category includes 1 million New York families. Bloomberg will build another 18,150 units for families who earn between $50,000 and $75,000. The problem: another 300,000 families qualify. And what about New Yorkers who earn more than $75,000, but who don't earn enough to disqualify them from middle-income housing? Bloomberg will build 34,650 apartments for *them*—but nearly 400,000 families are eligible.

Indeed, before the mayor had even broken ground on most of his 165,000 apartments, advocates at a May affordable-housing conference were saying that the city should build 500,000 "affordable" units. Unless Bloomberg effectively nationalizes the city's entire private housing stock to ensure that everyone who he believes "deserves" affordable housing gets affordable housing, all he has done is create a lottery in which 10 percent of the people who qualify win. But this isn't a voluntary lottery; everyone else pays through higher home prices and higher taxes.

. . . if Mayor Bloomberg would get out of the way.

MARY ALTAFFER/AP WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

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Further demolishing the housing program's rationale is that since all of the New Yorkers supposedly priced out of the city are counted here in the census, they can afford to live here by definition. In fact, despite the hysteria that the political class and the media regularly fan, and despite the stratospheric price increases of the past half-decade, New York still offers an array of middle-class housing.

Calling around Brooklyn and Queens, I found that I could rent a one-bedroom apartment in a good neighborhood for $870 and a two-bedroom for $1,200; the classified sections in the *Post* and the *Daily News* teem with ads for apartments under $1,200. In a real-estate feature, the *New York Times* recently found that "the good news is that there are plenty of one-bedrooms renting for $1,000 to about $1,150, and they are better than decent. . . . [O]nce you get out of Manhattan, . . . there are apartments to be had—and they can be found without even looking very hard."

A leasing agent at one apartment complex that looked perfectly decent from the outside told me over the phone that the income requirements were $35,000 for the one-bedroom and $50,000 for the two-bedroom; a married couple earning $25,000 each, or an adult pair of immigrant brothers, say, could earn enough to qualify, if they make $12 an hour. (No, a single mother with a low-wage job couldn't afford such an apartment "on her own" without government help. But that is a problem not of "affordability" but of single motherhood.)

Further, according to New York's finance department, the median single-family home in an outer borough sold for $378,000 in Brooklyn and $309,000 in the Bronx in 2004—yes, up more than 80 percent over five years but, with monthly mortgage costs of between $1,800 and $2,150 at today's interest rates, still within reach of New York families who earn $80,000. New Yorkers can also buy two-family homes for about $460,000, cutting their $2,700-or-so mortgages with $1,000 or more in rental income.

And New Yorkers are more resourceful than the mayor and the media think. Consider Kathleen Johnson, who lived with her husband and three children in a Brooklyn building for nearly two decades, paying $900 a month in 2001.

Johnson was a beneficiary of yet another city rent-regulation program: Mitchell-Lama. Starting in the late fifties, the city and state gave generous financing subsidies to developers who pledged to build housing and keep it "affordable" to middle-class New Yorkers for two to three decades. Once the developers had paid off their financing, they were free to go to "market" rate.

But when Johnson's landlord paid off his obligations under the city program and moved to evict his residents when their leases expired so he could build market-rate housing, the *Times* moved in to bewail the plight of the victims. "Where would we go after [we're evicted]?" Kathleen Johnson asked the *Times* in April 2001. "If you're not a CEO, to get a nice affordable apartment you practically have to give up your first-born."

When I found Johnson five years later, yes, she had been evicted from her apartment in 2004. She and her husband now were paying $2,500 for the two top floors of a Fort Greene, Brooklyn, brownstone. And yes, she had given up her first-born—to college.

Like many New Yorkers, Johnson grumbled: "I'm so unhappy about paying this rent. This is a tremendous amount of money, but this is the market." Neither is she too happy about how much it would cost to buy a Brooklyn apartment. Yes, she went through an unpleasant experience, but she lived to tell the tale: Bloomberg should have faith in New Yorkers' survival skills.

Distorting the market doesn't just result in higher housing costs for most New Yorkers (and higher taxes to fund the subsidies and maintain a vast housing bureaucracy). The city's incessant distortion of its housing market has a political cost, for it creates thousands of voters who vote on one issue: literal rent-seeking.

Mitchell-Lama, for one, spawned a generation of militant tenants' associations that have expertly treated mayors, city council members, and state assemblymen as their own lobbyists for permanent "affordability." Thousands of rent-stabilized tenants vote on just one issue as well: they demand a mayor and city council members who will fight for their below-market rents. Anyone who doubts their fervor should attend one of the city's spring Rent Guidelines Board meetings, at which tenants remind politicians of their political devotion just as mayoral appointees prepare to vote on annual rent hikes.

The most articulate tenants speak idealistically of how New York must remain affordable and accessible for everyone. But in reality, their civic idealism extends as far as the walls of their own apartments. No regulated Upper West Side tenant of a two-bedroom, $1,200 apartment earning $70,000 a year, for example, would ever pay more to live in a more modest apartment in the same neighborhood and let a poor immigrant family move into her digs, although it's clear who really "deserves" the benefit in a world of true "social justice."

"The city has created thousands of voters who vote on one issue: literal rent-seeking."

Nor do liberal co-op owners who cannily bought their prewar homes on the Upper West Side 15 years ago offer to forgo millions in profits by selling out cheap to new middle-class liberals rather than to the rich hedge-fund managers who can afford today's market prices. If Bloomberg tried to enact such a profit-limiting law, which truly would protect "affordability," he'd have an enraged mob at his heels.

Adding injury to insult, today's activists use affordable housing as a cudgel with which to club other citizens' rights. In Prospect Heights, Brooklyn, developer Bruce Ratner wants to raze decent privately owned housing to erect outsize skyscrapers. Bloomberg and other pols favor Ratner, although their constituents hate the plan, because Ratner has pledged to set aside housing to feed the "affordable" crowd. If Ratner gets his way, his affordable-housing benefits will be dispensed by local Acorn chief Bertha Lewis, one of the most radical members of what *City Journal*'s Steven Malanga has branded New York's New New Left.

And since the city has spent decades co-opting the private sector into its various subsidy programs, from Mitchell-Lama 40 years ago to New Housing Marketplace today, government interference in the housing market now has so much institutional support in New York among the development and banking community that it will be an uphill battle ever to lessen it. Nearly 1,000 attendees, hundreds of them nominally from the private sector, showed up at a May affordable-housing conference in Manhattan to learn about the latest round of subsidies. Sponsors and advertisers included many of the city's leading banks and consulting firms, as well as the usual politically connected developers like Forest City Ratner. Of course, developers today are happy to tell reporters and government officials that they absolutely cannot build housing for any New Yorkers save for the very rich without government subsidy.

To fix housing, Bloomberg could lobby for Albany to speed up rent regulation's demise. He could also spearhead reform of New York's irrational property-tax system, whose gross inequities understandably lead developers to demand breaks and loopholes. The mayor also could harness the creativity of the Department of Housing Preservation and Development to work with the feds to dismantle finally and humanely the city's vast public-housing archipelago, ending that permanent entitlement so that the neighborhoods most devastated by yesterday's bad decisions can recover fully.

But if the mayor doesn't want to do any of those things, he could do more good for the city than most public officials have done over the past century by reminding himself: first, do no harm.

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New York Cops: Still the Finest

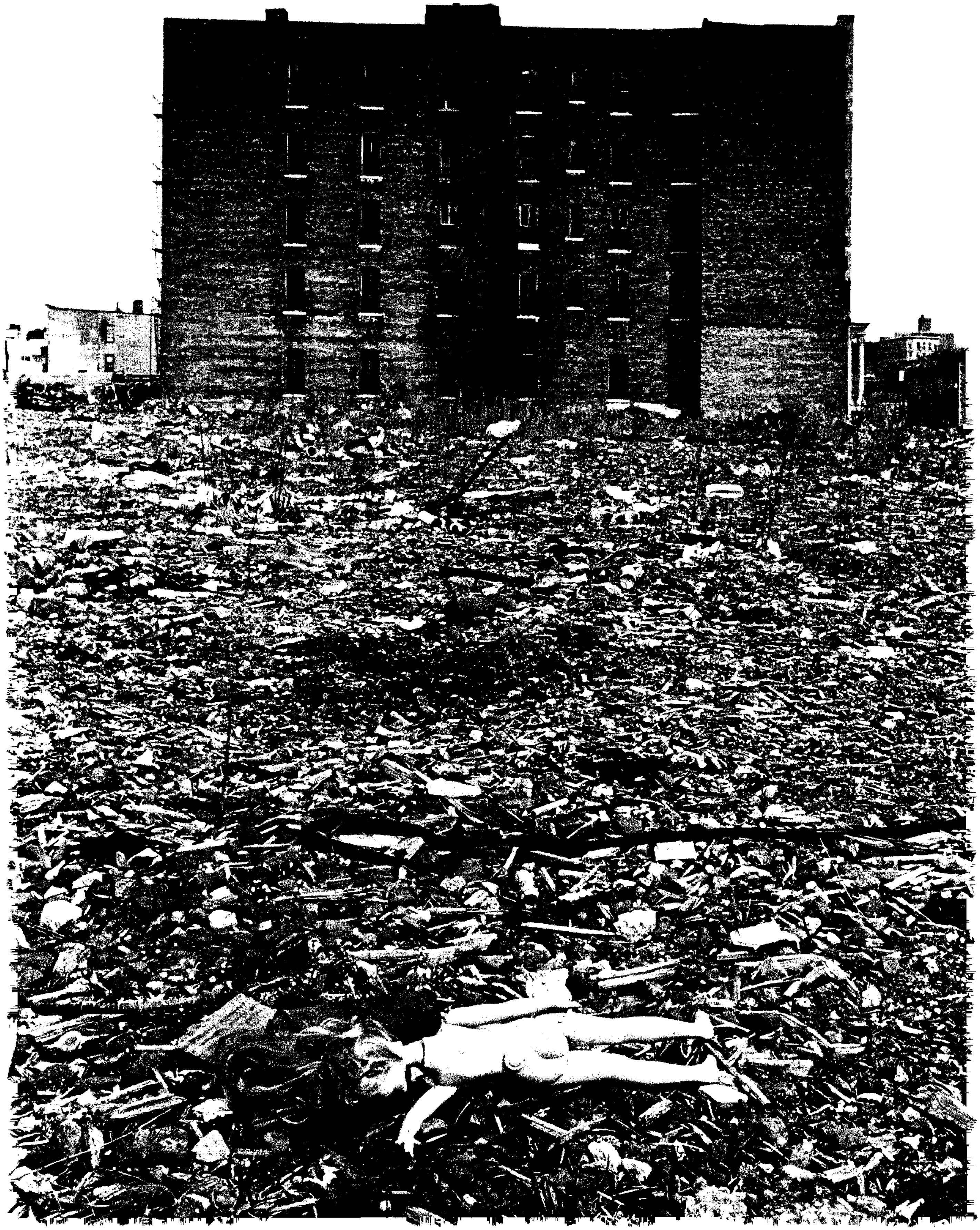
Bucking a
national trend,
Gotham's crime
rate keeps
dropping.
Here's why.

Heather Mac Donald

New York City has shattered criminology's central myth, but criminologists remain in denial. Policing, they still insist, can do little to lower crime. Economic inequality, demographic trends, changing drug-use patterns—these determine crime levels, they say, not police tactics. Nevertheless, since 1994, New York City has enjoyed a crime drop unmatched in the rest of the country—indeed, unparalleled in history—and only Gotham's revolutionary style of policing can explain it. Yet rather than flooding the city to study this paradigm-breaking phenomenon, most criminologists are busy looking the other way.

MEL ROSENTHAL/THE IMAGE WORKS

In an extraordinary virtuous circle, Gotham neighborhoods that looked dead 15 years ago . . .



The dimensions of New York's crime rout are breathtaking. From 1990 to 2000, four of the seven major felonies—homicide, robbery, burglary, and auto theft—dropped over 70 percent. Crime fell across the country during this period, but in New York it plummeted at twice the national average. By 2000, New York's crime profile looked more like that of a small suburb than a big city, notes University of California sociologist Frank Zimring, whose forthcoming *The Great American Crime Decline* is the only major study so far that acknowledges the significance of the city's crime turnaround. Gotham's homicide rate in 2000 was half that of the big-city average; its robbery rate, which started out 50 percent higher than that of other big cities in 1990, was 10 percent below the average.

“None of the favored criminological explanations can really explain New York's crime decline.”

The national crime decline flattened out as the new century began. Some cities that were darlings of the media and the criminologists in the nineties have seen sharp increases in murder. Boston, lauded by the *New York Times* and others as the kinder, gentler corrective to New York's allegedly overaggressive policing approach, has suffered its highest murder rate in a decade this year. Milwaukee and Memphis had double-digit homicide spikes in 2005. Philadelphia, Houston, San Francisco, and Kansas City are also seeing their nineties crime gains erode.

Not New York. From 2000 to 2005, the city's crime rate fell another 30 percent. New York's twenty-first-century experience is distinctive in the breadth and the depth of the continued decline. Even San Diego, the other favorite un–New York policing success story of the nineties, has not kept up with New York. While Gotham's crime rate clocked in at 71 percent below its 1990 level in 2004, San Diego mustered a 55 percent decline. “Something qualitatively different is going on in New York,” says Zimring.

. . . have come back to life, . . .

ELI REED/MAGNUM PHOTOS

That difference is policing. Throughout the nineties, critics of Mayor Rudolph Giuliani and the assertive policing that he championed tried to explain away the New York crime turnaround as a mere reflection of the national crime picture. That effort wasn't persuasive then and has been even less so since 2000.

True, something mysterious happened to crime across the country during the nineties. Violent and property crime went down 22 percent from 1991 to 2000, to reach the lowest rate since 1972. The American crime drop is the “biggest sociological fact of the second half of the twentieth century,” maintains Northwestern University political scientist Wesley Skogan. Yet it remains largely unexplained. “What drives us [researchers] crazy,” Skogan says, is the decline's ubiquity across very different environments. Economic hot spots and economic laggards, policing backwaters and policing trendsetters, states with high incarceration rates and states with low ones—crime fell in all of them.

To the extent that overarching causes drove the national decline, they undoubtedly influenced New York City's crime rate as well. But none of the favored criminological explanations can really explain what happened in New York, Zimring believes. The city's economic recovery in the nineties was weaker than that of other major metropolitan areas. Gotham's population of young black and Hispanic men—far and away the chief perpetrators of street crime—shrank, but less than the national average. Incarceration went up in New York, but it surged much more elsewhere. The big boom in New York prison construction and population occurred from 1985 through 1994, under Governor Mario Cuomo, without a significant downturn in crime. (What's more, since 1999, New York's prison population has shrunk by some 9,000 inmates, more than in any other state; yet crime has kept falling.) And though crack and cocaine use did wane in New

York City during the nineties, New York arrestees remained by the end of the decade "more deeply involved [in the drug] than elsewhere," reports Andrew Karmen, a sociologist at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice.

What did kick into high gear in late 1994, when New York crime began its dramatic dive, however, and what continues today, is the most focused form of policing in history. Zimring estimates that up to half of New York's crime drop in the 1990s, and virtually 100 percent of its continuing crime decline since 2000, has resulted from policing. And credit for keeping Gotham on the path of ongoing crime reduction belongs to Ray Kelly, serving his second tour of duty as the NYPD's commissioner.

It was by no means certain that New York would hold fast to its tough-minded

Cutting-Edge Counterterrorism

New York may still be the most inviting terror target in the U.S., but it has also become the best prepared. Since taking office in 2002, Commissioner Kelly has put the NYPD on an unforgiving schedule of emergency response training. Every day, 300 to 400 officers from every precinct will find themselves called without warning to a previously undisclosed high-value location, such as the Empire State Building, Times Square, or the Stock Exchange. Heavy-weapons units with machine guns, emergency services units, and detectives all rush to the scene and engage in a mock terror drill, with precincts competing to be the first to set up command posts and a mobilization area.

These "Hercules" surge drills aren't just about keeping the NYPD in top fighting form; they're also about disrupting terror planning. With a military-style force showing up every day at a major target around the city, any would-be terrorists surveilling those sites will rethink their chances of successfully carrying out an attack. Foreign TV crews have captured Hercules drills, sending the message back to potential terrorists in Europe and elsewhere that New York teems with military-garbed police packing assault weapons and looking for bad guys.

Further, the department constantly gathers intelligence about the city's radical mosques. As the Herald Square subway bombing plot trial revealed, it has cultivated informants among the city's radical populations and has sent undercovers to supplement them. The department sends detectives to work in eight foreign cities—Amman, Jordan; London; Lyon, France (where Interpol is located); Montreal; Santo Domingo; Tel Aviv; Singapore; and Toronto (with Madrid soon to join the list)—where they plug into the host country's counterterrorism force and pump information back home. Right after last summer's London subway bombings, the NYPD's London agent called Deputy Commissioner of Intelligence David Cohen to report on the materials used, the backpacks, and the suspects. The department immediately furnished officers with this intelligence and redeployed them on the New York subways, rather than have them wait to learn the details of the attacks from CNN.

The department's counterterrorism bureau, which collaborates with the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force, has had agents in Afghanistan, Cuba, and Iraq. All told, 1,000 NYPD officers work in the department's various terrorism commands.

The most impressive aspect of Commissioner Kelly's antiterrorism initiatives, though, is the department's ability to remain vigilant despite the indeterminate—and, since 9/11, as yet unrealized—nature of the threat. In May, the department revised its strategy for protecting the city's subway tunnels. Officers once stationed immobilely at the tunnels would now periodically ride the trains to look for explosives or other signs of sabotage. Equally unprecedented are the department's in-house bioweapons experts—doctors in white coats, on the lookout for invisible agents of destruction. This constant rethinking and analysis means that for now, at least, the city's counterterrorism efforts are as cutting-edge as they come.

crime-fighting methods when a new mayor took office in 2002. The department could have gone back to the feel-good but feckless "community policing" that it practiced in the crime-ridden pre-Giuliani period. Giuliani loyalists, perennially predicting *le déluge*, greeted Kelly's appointment with dismay. Not only had he served as police commissioner during the last two years of the disastrous David Dinkins mayoralty (ending in 1994); he also had joined the chorus criticizing Giuliani-style aggressive policing. In 1996, Kelly told *Time* that attributing New York's crime turnaround to policing made no sense: "It's like trying to take credit for an eclipse," he observed. "A lot of people aren't comfortable with this style. It goes to the question of what kind of policing we want in America. You can probably shut down just about all crime, if you're willing to burn down the village to save it. Eventually, I think, there will be a backlash, and crime will go back up."

> **"Locking up, or issuing summonses to, the right people lies at the heart of 'broken windows' policing."**

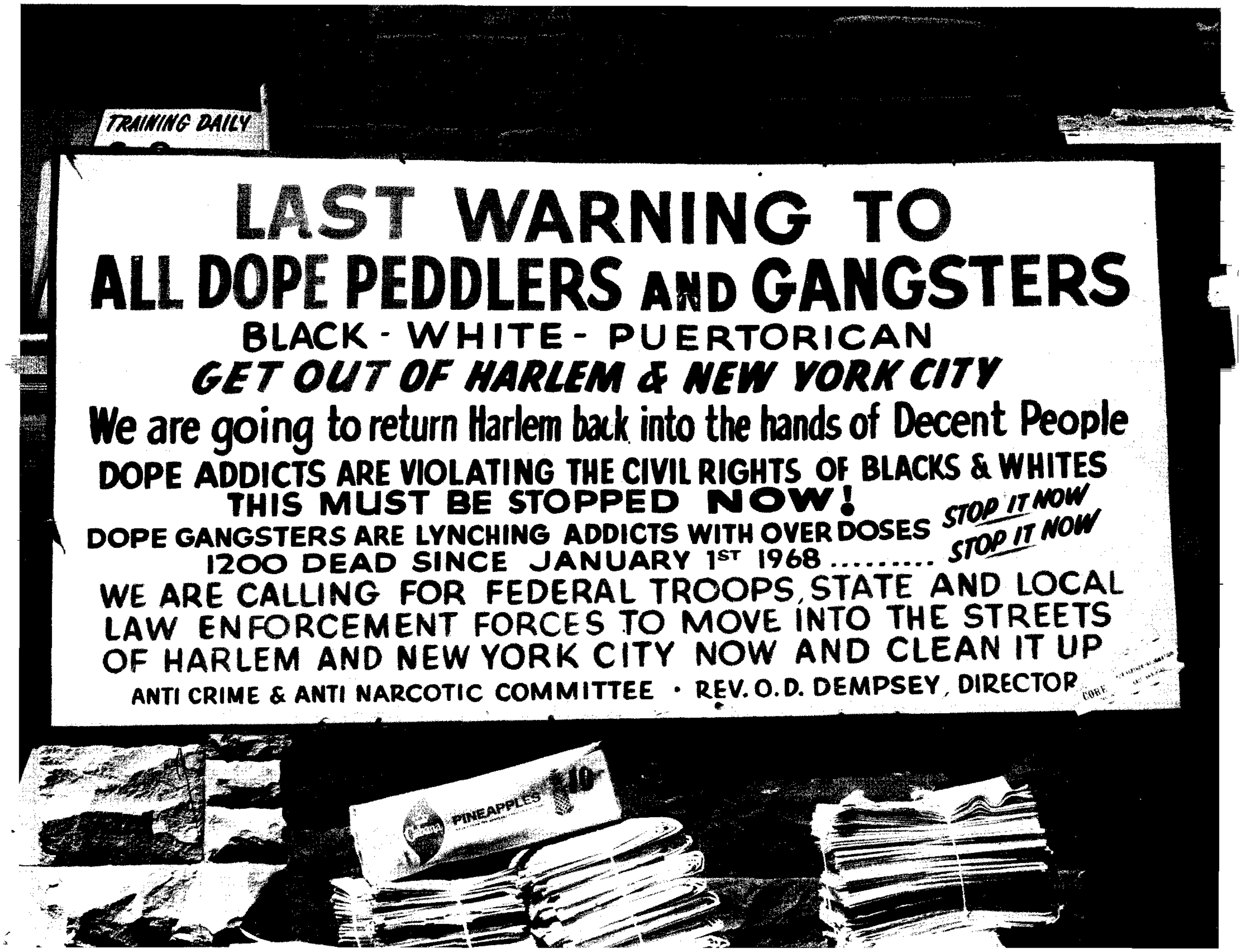
But to his immense credit (and that of Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who has backed him), Kelly has maintained the heart of New York's policing revolution—the now-famous accountability mechanism known as Compstat, a weekly crime-control meeting where top brass grill precinct bosses about every last detail of their command—even as he has refined the department's ability to analyze and respond to crime trends. Kelly has also molded the force into a vital defense against terrorism. The NYPD now gathers more antiterror intelligence than any U.S. public entity outside the federal government, and probably shares it better, too (see box). The counterterrorism mission took 1,000 cops off their usual beats, adding to the loss of more than 3,000 officers through attrition during Mayor Bloomberg's first term. Despite the force contractions, Kelly has kept crime rates moving downward.

Kelly is as intense a commissioner as the department has had since Giuliani's first top cop, William Bratton. He rarely awards himself a vacation beyond a long weekend. With typical reticence, he refuses to discuss how his view of policing may have evolved over the years. "That is ancient history now," he says curtly, in his large police-headquarters office. "We have to do our own thing here. Compstat we still use, but we do a lot of things differently." For all his desire to distinguish himself from his predecessors, though, Kelly is now fully on board with the philosophy that policing *can* control crime. Asked if there's a floor beneath which crime can't drop further, he responds: "We don't accept any crime increase—we will continue to drive it down with technology and tactics."

Kelly's legacy will include a strengthened commitment to quality-of-life enforcement, new strategies for deploying officers, and better use of technology. The commissioner's passion for urban order is manifest. He grabs a large book from his desk, filled with color photos of nuisance offenses throughout the city. "Female drinking from an open container in public," reads one photo. "Unlicensed vendor selling socks," says another. "This [disorder] was something we knew we had to get a hold of," he tells me. Kelly's squad of photographers roams the city, documenting illegal street behavior; Kelly then e-mails the snapshots to the responsible precinct commanders to goad them into action.

Nervous New York residents interpret every sighting of a disheveled bum as a sign that the city is sliding back into chaos. But in fact the NYPD has beefed up its defenses against urban decay. Kelly has boosted the size of the homeless outreach unit and told it to start arresting people for trespassing and other crimes. "You have to lock up the right people," Kelly explains unapologetically.

Locking up, or issuing summonses to, the right people lies at the heart of the NYPD's "broken



LAST WARNING TO
ALL DOPE PEDDLERS AND GANGSTERS
BLACK - WHITE - PUERTORICAN
GET OUT OF HARLEM & NEW YORK CITY
We are going to return Harlem back into the hands of Decent People
DOPE ADDICTS ARE VIOLATING THE CIVIL RIGHTS OF BLACKS & WHITES
THIS MUST BE STOPPED NOW!
DOPE GANGSTERS ARE LYNCHING ADDICTS WITH OVER DOSES
1200 DEAD SINCE JANUARY 1ST 1968 ....
STOP IT NOW
STOP IT NOW
WE ARE CALLING FOR FEDERAL TROOPS, STATE AND LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT FORCES TO MOVE INTO THE STREETS OF HARLEM AND NEW YORK CITY NOW AND CLEAN IT UP
ANTI CRIME & ANTI NARCOTIC COMMITTEE • REV. O. D. DEMPSEY, DIRECTOR

. . . because the crime that was strangling them . . .

windows" policing. By going after misdemeanors like public urination or turnstile jumping, the police can intervene with a much broader segment of the population than if they only pursued serious felonies. Deputy Commissioner of Operations Garry McCarthy recalls the days when officials denigrated quality-of-life policing as a waste of resources. "When we weren't as concerned with the public consumption of alcohol, for example, we lost the opportunity to interact with someone who may be a criminal," he says. "By eliminating conditions, we're apprehending criminals and stopping crimes waiting to happen: if you let those guys on the corner keep drinking, by nighttime, they may be committing felony assault against each other."

The twenty-first-century NYPD combines Kelly's belief in quality-of-life enforcement with a new method of deploying rookie cops to cool down crime hot spots. Rather than divvying up the 3,000 Police Academy grads each year among all the precincts, as it once did, the department now puts them in 21 high-crime areas, where they walk beats. You can't move 50 yards in a so-called Impact Zone without crossing paths with an officer or two. Besides deterring crime by their mere presence, Impact cops hand out scores of nuisance summonses, helping to restore safety and order to their beats.

Eagerly sought by community boards, the rookie-saturated zones have almost always produced crime drops of 30 percent or so over their six-month spans. "While our Impact Zone was there, it was like heaven," recalls Johnny Klein, a member of the clergy-affiliated Community Action Project in Flatbush and a resident of the 71st Precinct. "This huge weight gets lifted from the community; no one can do anything on the street that's illegal. Everyone can see that the officers are green, but they outnumber the bad guys."

> **"New York can throw officers at crime problems in a way that most departments can only dream about."**

Impact exploits one of the department's greatest advantages: massive size. Policing is the one area where New York's appetite for big government pays off. The city's 37,000 officers add up to twice the per-capita average of other large cities; the department's annual graduating class alone is larger than nearly every police force in the country. New York can throw officers at crime problems in a way that most departments can only dream about—though obviously it must throw them intelligently, with a plan and constant follow-up.

The NYPD tries to use its size to create the impression of omnipresence in would-be offenders' minds. Talk to at-risk youth, and you get a sense that the effort is working: all report cops stopping and questioning them. Billy, an 18-year-old from high-crime East New York in Brooklyn, says undercovers stopped him three times last summer, looking for suspects. "They'll give a ticket for throwing your cigarette on the ground or for standing on the corner," he grumbles. Jay, a 17-year-old from Crown Heights on probation for violent attacks at his school, complains about a stop from the previous week, while he was hanging out in front of his apartment building. "They [the undercovers] came up to me and asked my name," he says. "I was like, 'Excuse me? I don't give my name to strangers.' "

An ongoing decoy operation in the transit system also seeks to reinforce the sense that the cops are everywhere. Operation Lucky Bag plants "abandoned" backpacks and purses in the subways—and then nabs the thieves who take them. In a March sting on Coney Island, a group of four roving teens grabbed the decoy bag off a bench, tossed it onto an arriving train, and started dividing up the contents. A swarm of undercover officers suddenly materialized, seemingly out of nowhere, and arrested them. That gang will send the message to their friends that plainclothes cops may lurk anywhere. Lucky Bag also illustrates the broken-windows truth that petty offenders and hard-core criminals are often one and the same people. Among the serious thugs it has apprehended is one who tried to kill an officer in 1994.

Kelly understands the "direct correlation," as he puts it, "between the size of the department and the amount of crime." He will add 800 officers to the force, partially restoring post-9/11 cuts.

He sets equal store by technology and has two signature projects under way. The $12 million Real Time Crime Center applies data mining to crime solving. When a murder or shooting comes in over the police radio, analysts in the flashy downtown center get on their computers and search for all relevant info on the crime location, suspects, and victims. A mobile data van zooms to the crime scene and prints out the downtown center's analyses, enabling detectives

LEO VALS/HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

NYPD
N.Y.P.D.
COMMUNITY
AFFAIRS

. . . fell before the onslaught of determined, skillful policing.

investigating the crime to track down relevant clues while they're still hot. Whether the center will revolutionize crime solving remains to be seen, since some of its capacity, such as the mobile computer vans, remains underutilized. But the data banks that the department is developing could prove a bonanza to researchers seeking to understand who commits crimes, and why.

It's a certainty, though, that Kelly's second technology plan—to install over 500 cameras across the city—will increase the department's ability to prevent and solve crimes. Anyone who still disputes that cameras deter criminals and terrorists—ACLU, that would be you!—should read the testimony of the Pakistani immigrant convicted in May of plotting to blow up New York's Herald Square subway station. Shahawar Matin Siraj told an informant that he had cased the station for surveillance cameras but had found none, making it a prime target.

The key to the NYPD's crime-fighting success remains Compstat, however. Policing skeptics rarely bother to study Compstat closely. If they did, they would be hard-pressed to explain how it *couldn't* have an influence on crime and public order. The biggest problem in police departments is maintaining focus; in New York, Compstat keeps every commander monomaniacally zeroed in on lowering crime.

Commissioner Kelly left in place the previous administration's two hard-charging heads of Compstat, Chief of Department Joseph Esposito and Deputy Commissioner of Operations Garry McCarthy, whose expertise gives the city a crime-fighting brain trust. For each week's session, Compstat analysts pore over every statistic in the precinct scheduled for review—outstanding warrants and wanted cards, fingerprint hits, parolees in the area. They may drive to the precinct in an unmarked car at 3 AM to monitor how officers respond to 911 calls, or comb detectives' files to determine if they're tracking down witnesses and perps as tirelessly as they should. A detective who has overlooked an opportunity to nab a robbery suspect at an unrelated court appearance, for example, will face an unpleasant time at Compstat. Have a precinct's domestic-violence officers been visiting high-risk offenders at night and on weekends? If the officers have slacked off, supervisors will hear about it. And before a Compstat session, smart executive officers will go to the scene of every recent shooting to make sure that they know all its details.

“I have literally perspired from my armpits to my waist after viewing an acrimonious Compstat grilling.”

After a thousand meetings since its inception, Compstat still possesses the capacity to terrify even those not on the hot seat. “I have literally perspired from my armpits to my waist after viewing an acrimonious Compstat grilling,” says one captain. But however grueling, Compstat is an unmatched mechanism for disseminating the department's cumulative knowledge about tactics and for evaluating what does and doesn't work. Theme-based meetings might review how to infiltrate pawnshops during burglary investigations, for instance, or how best to fight subway theft.

The results can be striking. The 83rd Precinct in Bushwick, Brooklyn, found itself called into Compstat after a bad week in January, when eight thefts of iPods and cell phones had pushed its monthly crime numbers up 19 percent. Two weeks later, after the Compstat session, crime had fallen nearly 21 percent.

The reason? Thanks to new deployment strategies developed at the Compstat meeting, the precinct had caught every one of the robbers. The commanding officers had also relearned long-term lessons at that Compstat session, such as not closing a case before the arrest of every assailant a victim identifies and ensuring that an arrest leads to an indictment. Compstat fights fatalism about the judicial system by demanding that commanders take responsibility for the entire course of crime fighting. “I squeeze the sergeants,” explains the 83rd Precinct's Lieutenant John Viscardi. “I tell them: ‘When you go to court with an arrest, make sure you have everything you need for an indictment. Do you need backup from other officers or information from us?’ If the case is thrown out because of our negligence, that robber doesn't just go back out on the street; he goes back emboldened.”

Under Kelly, the department has used Compstat to target multiple crimes committed by a single perp or group of perps. Because solving such “pattern crimes” produces a considerable bang for the law-enforcement buck, they receive intense attention until cleared, even if lots of time passes. If the Compstat analysts downtown decide that several robberies in fact are related, and the commander hasn't identified the pattern, he will suffer.

Despite Compstat's accountability safeguard, Deputy Commissioner McCarthy remains

ETHEL WOLVOVITZ/THE IMAGE WORKS

haunted by the specter of flagging performance. Asked what he worries about most, McCarthy responds: "That we start missing a step. We're not yet at 100 percent efficiency. Do we lose track of things? We know what we have to do to keep it going; we have systems set up, but sometimes we fail because there's a break in the link. We have to make our processes automatic." The department is getting diminishing returns from its efforts, he says. "When we started out, if there were a hundred things we could do and we did ten, we'd get a 10 percent drop in crime. Now if we don't do all 98, we'll see an increase."

Behind the worry is the sense that crime could shoot up again instantly. The criminal culture hasn't changed, many officers believe. "It's a struggle all the time," says Michael Farrell, deputy commissioner of strategic initiatives, whose office conducts research on policing and crime. "It's not simply a matter of fixing the problem five years ago. New cohorts of offenders are appearing all the time. You have to constantly create a sense of deterrence and order, so as to change the formulation that young people make about their likelihood of getting caught."

And since the department lives by the numbers, it can also die by them. With crime so low, it takes only a few extra shootings or assaults to produce a large percentage increase in crime. One additional homicide can make a week's citywide homicide numbers jump 14 percent over the previous year, for instance. The press will then seize on the percentage for the scary CRIME RISING IN NEW YORK story. Asked when they start to worry that crime really is going back up, most NYPD leaders deny the possibility. "We will never say that crime is going back up, because it won't happen," asserts McCarthy. "There are some precincts where

Are the Cops Underreporting Crime?

Despite the ongoing transformation of New York's worst neighborhoods, policing skeptics continue to insinuate that the city's crime drop is in part illusory. The police, they say, fudge the books in order to underreport crime.

The market alone would seem to refute this charge. If crime were far worse than the police disclosed, demand for residential and commercial space would eventually dry up. The opposite has happened.

But officers possess enormous discretion in whether and how to report crime. While absolutely no evidence has emerged that the NYPD systematically skews the numbers, sometimes officers do choose not to document certain crimes—usually for good reason.

A Harlem sergeant describes a typical incident of non-reporting: "Last weekend," he says, "a known neighborhood knucklehead hit a kid. In retaliation, the kid's whole family shows up at the perp's apartment. The victim's sisters kick in the apartment door. But the knucklehead's mother beat the shit out of the sisters, leaving them lying on the floor with blood coming from their mouths.

"The victim's family was looking for a fight: I could charge them with trespass. The perp's mother is eligible for assault three for beating up the opposing family. But all of them were street shit, garbage. They will get justice in their own way. I told them: 'We can all go to jail, or we can call it a wash.' Otherwise, you'd have six bodies in prison for BS behavior. The district attorney would have been pissed. And none of them would ever show up in court." So the officer sent the families packing, leaving the assaults off his ledger.

Less justifiably, officers also practice a "no harm, no foul" philosophy to avoid the paperwork hassle of filling out crime reports. Earlier this year, a rookie working the East Harlem Impact Zone heard gunshots on 109th Street but could find neither shooter nor any victims. He didn't report the shooting. "What's the point of filling out a 61 [a crime report] if no one is hurt?" asks an East Harlem sergeant.

crime is so low—ten incidents a week—that that *may be all we can do*. We'll try to hold the line there, and push down on the big dogs like the 75th, 44th, and 46th Precincts [in Brooklyn and the Bronx]. The department should be responsible even for one extra crime a day. We'll find ways to fix it by building a better mousetrap—through deployment, quickly apprehending criminals, and good sentencing work with the district attorney and probation."

In most areas, the department's performance justifies such bravado. Earlier this year, NYPD brass eyed the shooting numbers with concern. After dropping precipitously in 2004 to their lowest level in decades, shootings rose by 50 incidents, or 3 percent, in 2005. As of February 26, 2006, they were up 5 percent, or nine additional incidents, over the same period in 2005. Yet by June 18, shootings were down 3.7 percent compared with the previous year, and at 598 incidents since January 1, looked likely to come in even under the 652 incidents through June of the historically low 2004.

Opinion on the street varies on whether more New Yorkers are carrying guns. An undercover sergeant in East Harlem says he's "definitely not seeing more guns. Criminals are getting smarter; they are not carrying." But 17-year-old Russell, a student at Harlem's parochial Rice High School, claims that since 2003 "guns have rapidly gotten into the hands of 16- to 17-year-olds like a plague. If you have enemies, you will get a gun immediately." Buying a gun was once hard, he claims. "Now it's quick and easy"—he could get one from friends for just $250 to $400, he says. The Bronx is the hotbed of gun possession, this 11th-grader asserts. Like everything in New York's underclass culture, "it's already happened in the Bronx when it comes to Harlem."

The illegal-alien population is another source of unreported crime. In a typical case from February, a Brooklyn transit officer nabbed a career criminal who had robbed an illegal Mexican on the subway. "It was a beautiful piece of police work which undoubtedly prevented future robberies," says the officer's supervisor. But the robber is now in jail only because he had already violated an outstanding parole warrant. On the robbery assault, he escaped prosecution, because the Mexican victim had given the arresting officer phony contact information, and the district attorney, unable to track the victim down, declined to draw up a criminal complaint for the robbery. "It's just lucky for me that this perp violated his parole," says the transit supervisor. "Otherwise he would be out there tonight on the subway, punching people in the face and demanding money."

As for the allegation, made by some Giuliani supporters, that arresting officers undercharge crimes, opinion in the field divides. "If cops make an arrest on a complaint, they have a tendency to overcharge," in order to get the perp the highest possible sentence, a subway captain insists. By contrast, a Harlem undercover says that downgrading incidents is a "constant thing"—partly to diminish Compstat heat on favored lieutenants. "If you have a choice between a felony assault and a misdemeanor, you make it a misdemeanor."

No one I spoke to, however, alleges that commanding officers pressure their troops to manipulate the numbers. To the contrary, the NYPD's crime-reporting audits—at least twice a year in every division of the department—are rigorous and unforgiving. Each reclassification of a crime must receive official approval, and the precinct member who signed off on the reclassification will have to justify his decision. A Queens captain had to retire immediately, losing over $100,000 in accrued overtime benefits, for improperly fiddling with the statistics.

Nor does anyone allege that downgrading or non-reporting of crime incidents has gone up in recent years. This discretionary behavior is a constant feature of the choices that officers make in exercising their authority. It went on before New York's crime drop and undoubtedly continues today—but the crime drop is no less real because of it.

Yet if teens are carrying guns more often, they're not yet more prone to shoot, Russell observes. "A lot of teens are petrified to use them. They point it to scare people away. And they worry all the time about the police." Russell and his friends believe that if the cops catch you with a gun used in previous crimes, you'll face charges for all those crimes, even if you didn't commit them—a useful fiction.

Though shootings have stabilized, murder and rapes in 2006 have been bouncing around above their 2005 numbers—up 9.1 percent as of June 18 for murders and 4.8 percent for rapes, even as overall crime fell another 5.1 percent. But it's premature to sound an alarm. Homicides rose in three of the seven years between 1998 and 2005, yet by 2005, they were 14 percent below the 1998 level. Over the long run, the NYPD has managed to squelch incipient crime increases through its laser-beam management. As yet, there's no reason to believe that the current uptick is any different.

By now, the department has a powerful partner in its crime-fighting efforts: a revitalized city. Talk to residents of former high-crime neighborhoods and you hear a multipronged explanation for the crime drop: policing gets the criminals out, development keeps them out, and the upgraded neighborhood reinforces the new order. The housing and commercial boom in areas once synonymous with violence is of a magnitude that no one, even up through the late 1990s, could have predicted. In the 1970s, hundreds of people would line up at the corners of a ten-block stretch of Eighth Avenue in Harlem and sell drugs. Today, the dealers are gone, and in their place are housing renovations and new construction worth millions of dollars. The city's high-end realtors have set up shop on 116th Street, among cafés and Parisian bakeries. Corporate America wants a piece of the action, planting chain stores in former domestic war zones as fast as it can find space.

Billy Proctor has seen the change on his block. A middle-aged shoe salesman in a camelhair coat and an "NYC" cap, he greets a rookie officer patrolling 123rd Street as part of a Central Harlem Impact Zone. As recently as last December, squatters occupied a graceful limestone apartment building on the street; Proctor heard the thud from his apartment next door when one of them was thrown off the rooftop in a dispute. Today, a busy gut renovation of the formerly colonized building is in progress. "This street has a long history of drugs," Proctor says. "A couple of years ago, a guy came back from prison and declared: 'I'm going to run this neighborhood.' He was selling crack and cocaine. His rivals killed him right on the block." Today, though, the block is peaceful, through a combination of ongoing police patrol and population turnover. "They [the dealers] have got the message; those guys had enough smarts to get out." Some former residents, too, have moved—to wherever they can find subsidized rents, he says.

The new, better-off residents bring a different expectation about public safety. Yasmin Cornelius, head of Community Board 10 in Harlem, gets calls about drug dealing "every five minutes" from people who just moved into Harlem. "Maybe they thought it was no longer an issue," she says, somewhat contemptuously. These newcomers will put renewed pressure on the police to end the problem and be less likely to be caught up in the drug trade themselves. "When people move in, they fight back," explains Nadine Whitted, director of Community Board 4 in Brooklyn's Bushwick neighborhood.

Columbia University criminologist Jeffrey Fagan believes that population change has helped drive New York's post-2000 crime drop. "Policing can only do so much. You have to look at the political economy," he suggests. "If housing becomes more expensive, poor people move out, and the people who replace them will not be the same," he says. "They will have or make more money. As people become stakeholders, their behavior changes. They are more inclined to engage in social control, such as being out on the street, helping the police, and engaging in regular public life."

These observations—from inner-city residents and academics alike—tread taboo ground. They suggest that one of the most effective ways of reducing crime is to replace the urban underclass—only a small percentage of whom actively engage in criminal activity—with wealthier, more socially engaged residents. Fagan quickly distances himself from the implications of what he is saying: "I'm not arguing for gentrification as a solution to crime," he objects. But commanders who have witnessed New York's liberation from crime offer support for the theory. Neighborhoods with high concentrations of housing projects always have greater crime problems than the rest of the city, they say, because the local criminal population entrenches itself so deeply there.

> **"The housing and commercial boom in once-violent areas is of a magnitude that no one could have predicted."**

But while population turnover may contribute to the ongoing crime decline, a renewed commitment to public safety by longtime residents also plays its role. Harlem's 28th Precinct Community Council meeting in February exemplified the virtuous cycle that successful policing sets off: a neighborhood starts to come back, leading its newly hopeful occupants to demand even tougher policing. At the meeting, an older woman politely requested better quality-of-life enforcement around her home. Her building had gone co-op, and the owners were moving back in after renovation. "We'd appreciate your helping us to make sure people are not loitering. There is a concrete curb outside the building. We noticed people sitting there. It should not be." Alerted to a potential problem, the police will now intervene before it gets out of hand.

Left-wing academics deny that law-abiding inner-city residents desire an orderly environment as fiercely as the wealthy. Enforcing loitering ordinances or open-container rules in minority neighborhoods, they charge, is simply a racist attack on the oppressed. Many such academics have obviously spoken to very few poor people, so as not to disrupt their fantasy of a revolutionary vanguard ready to attack bourgeois conventions. Andrew Karmen of John Jay College of Criminal Justice sees crime "as a distorted form of social protest." Inner-city residents beg to differ. Asked what activities bother her constituents most, Nadine Whitted of the Bushwick Community Board bluntly replies: "Drugs still being sold, youth crime, people hanging out, loud music."

Community redevelopment alone cannot keep crime down, however; assertive policing remains essential. Like New York, Boston in the 1990s saw renewal in neighborhoods that previously no one would touch (albeit at nowhere near the gale force of New York's gentrification). Crime has shot back up in spite of that new investment, because the Boston police lost their focus, according to David Kennedy, a crime researcher at John Jay College and an advisor to the Boston Police Department during the 1990s "Boston Miracle." "The NYPD never backed off from its fundamental response. Boston did," he says.

The conclusion is unavoidable: policing is the most powerful tool that society possesses against crime. Since the 1960s, New York has spent billions on redistributionist social programs designed to eradicate both poverty and the dysfunctional behavior of the underclass. Yet by the 1990s, packs of feral youths roamed subways and parks, maiming and murdering. Thugs armed with military weaponry ruled whole neighborhoods. Today, thanks to the NYPD, those neighborhoods thrive with commerce and family life. Urban government does not possess the power to transform character or to uplift residents beyond what they're willing to do for themselves, but it can provide the most important basis of civil society: security. And in so doing, New York policing has helped the poor more than decades of welfare programs ever did.

Urbanities

Desperate Grandmas

Kay S. Hymowitz

Now sexagenarians, narcissistic feminists are still seeking the Best Sex Ever.

Time passes, and we get old. Our faces wrinkle, our hair goes gray and MIA, our teeth yellow, our knees ache, we forget the names of people we said hello to just yesterday on the way to pick up the Geritol, and there are days when a nap sounds real nice.

At least that’s the way it’s been for most of humanity. But rumors that boomers will be joining the great biological stream turn out to have been greatly exaggerated. Boomers—especially feminist-influenced women of a certain class who are now publishing their philosophy of life after 50—will not be growing old. And it seems equally inaccurate to say that they will mature. They are going to *season*, as Gail Sheehy puts it in her most recent book, *Sex and the Seasoned Woman*. They will “develop”; they will “grow.” Sheehy and her sister scribes have come forward to tell you that today’s older women are a new breed. They’re busy, busy, busy! They go to the gym! They work in animal shelters! They travel! They get divorced! And yes (Yes! Yes!), they have orgasms!

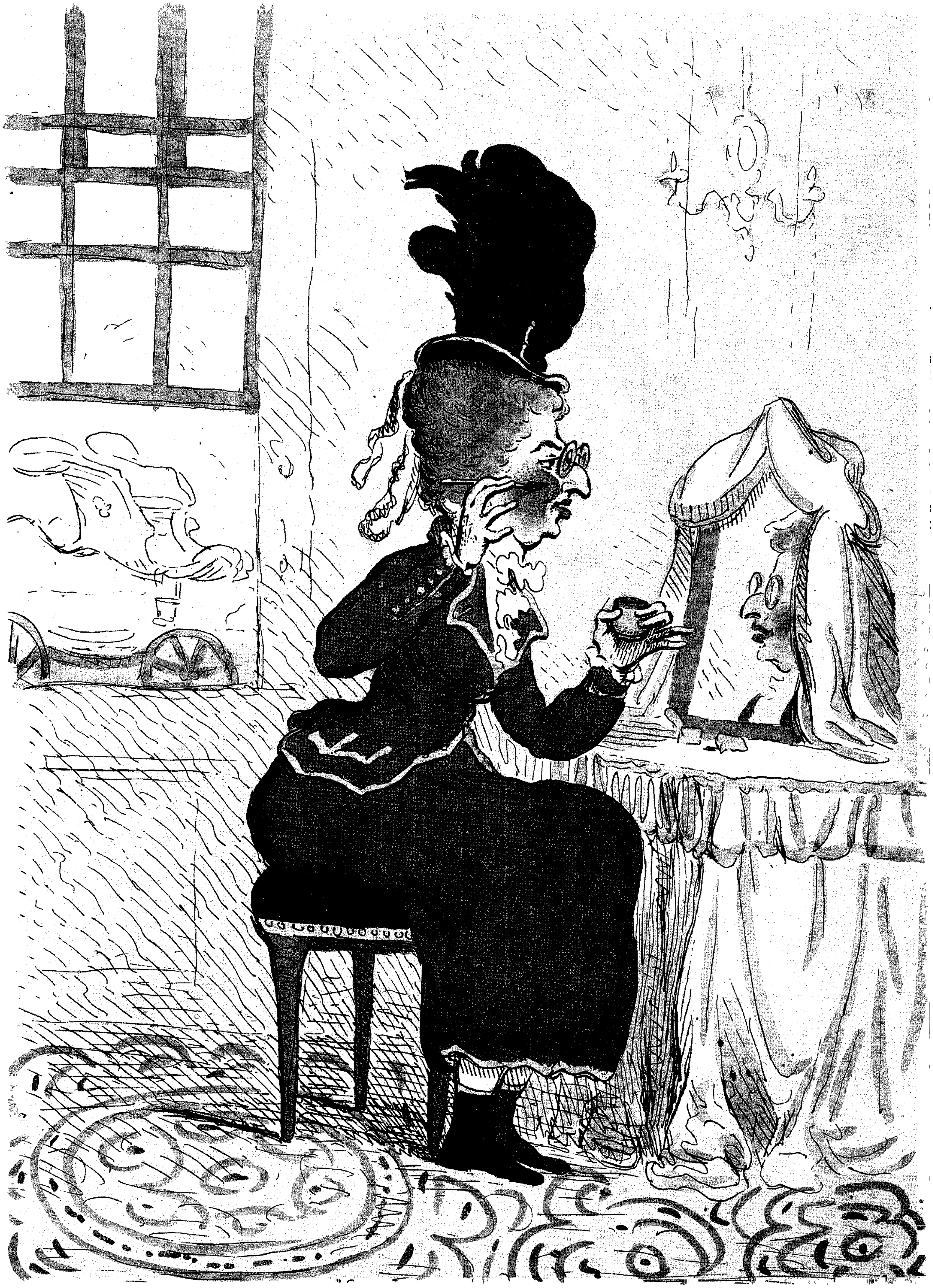
And in their own inimitably modern, American, follow-your-bliss, self-absorbed way, they want to tell you all about it.

Not so long ago, enlightened women of the boomer generation were known for worrying about equal rights, equal pay, *Roe* v. *Wade*, Title IX, and the location of the Masters Golf Tournament. Today, not so much. As they shuffle off into their golden years, many appear to be turning inward. As the title of a catalog that arrived in my mailbox recently put it, they want “Time for Me”—time that appears to involve a lot of anti-aging formulas, herbal supplements, figure-shaping undergarments, and vibrators. Don’t get me wrong. Boomer fems continue to be enemies of the patriarchy. They still want men to do the laundry. Their tone remains defiant. But their personal is no longer very political; even their political isn’t very political. Nobody’s putting it this way, but it seems that liberation politics have become irrelevant to what is now their most pressing concern, which—depending on your emphasis—is: how to bring meaning to their dwindling years, or how to avoid being mistaken for their grandmothers.

It probably should have been clear that Second Wave feminism would be changing direction a while ago. In 1992, Gloria Steinem, who just happened to be staring at 60 at the time, published *Revolution from Within: A Book of Self-Esteem*. With its talk of the inner child and “authentic selves,” the book was a noticeable break from Steinem’s usual menu of feminist topics. A year later, Betty Friedan gave us *The Fountain of Age*, in which she proposed that we consider the years past 50 not as a time to play golf and show off pictures of the grandchildren but as “an additional stage of development,” a time of further emotional, intellectual, and spiritual growth. But despite Steinem’s and Friedan’s legendary history as trendsetters, no one paid much attention at the time, doubtless because boomers, who had yet to receive their AARP cards in the mail, were still in a “what, me worry?” mode.

But now that *Newsweek* has made it official with a cover story announcing the first boomers’ arrival at age 60, the signs of a revolution going inward are unmistakable. “Our record is impressive,” writes Suzanne Braun Levine in *Inventing the Rest of Our Lives: Women in Second Adulthood*. “We fought discrimination in the workplace and popularized the notion of family leave and

JAMES GILLRAY, “THE FINISHING TOUCH” (1791)/COURTESY OF THE WARDEN AND SCHOLARS OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD/THE BRIDGEMAN ART LIBRARY



flexible work schedules; we forced our way into institutions and professions and levels of leadership that even the most optimistic didn't dare predict. . . . But for many, enough activism is enough. They want to stop fighting the system and invest their energies in themselves."

Levine takes the phrase "Second Adulthood" from Gail Sheehy. Sheehy, you may remember, mapped the "stages of adult development" in 1970 in her megahit *Passages*—though she stopped at age 50, because at the time the post-50 years didn't seem worth the price of ink. For obvious reasons, she has changed her mind, and in *New Passages: Mapping Your Life Across Time* she has announced the discovery of Second Adulthood, a new "frontier" that encompasses the years from 45 to 85+ (oh, the "passage" evoked by that "+"!).

Now, Second Adulthood does not—repeat *not*—suggest a decline. It does not bring inevitable loss, nor does it suggest that we should turn to the consolations of philosophy, religion, or arthritis medication—because Second Adulthood is nothing like your grandmother's 50 or 60 or 70. According to Levine, Sheehy, and the numerous coaches, therapists, and lifestyle gurus who are banking on the idea, it is a thrilling time of growth and change, an exciting opportunity to redefine our lives and ourselves—"a second chance—to do it better, to do it differently, to do it wiser," in Levine's words.

The women of the Second Wave were already highly evolved—liberated yet sensitive, strong yet compassionate—but in Second Adulthood they are ascending into goddesshood. Christiane Northrup's bestseller *The Wisdom of Menopause* describes the years after menopause—average age 51—as potentially "the beginning of a woman's most sexually passionate, creatively inspired, and professionally productive phase of life." So profound are the changes that a woman goes through as she passes into Second Adulthood that she must first pass through what Sheehy has dubbed "Middlescence," a term that may sound to the cynics suspiciously like "obsolescence" but is actually meant to stand for "midlife adolescence." Middlescence is Sheehy at her most canny—which is very canny indeed. Through the elixir of pop sociology, she offers boomers what they have most wished: they can now remain teenagers into old age.

The shape of midlife teen turmoil is well on display in Levine's *Inventing the Rest of Our Lives*, a book of such stunning banality it makes Sheehy look like Hannah Arendt. "My teenagers and I are grappling with the same two disorienting questions," Levine explains. "What is happening to my body and Who am I?" "The Problem That Has No Name has been replaced by The Question That Has Many Answers: *What am I going to do with the rest of my life*?" Don't try to learn from the past, and *definitely* don't count your blessings, because "You're Not Who You Were, Only Older." You need to "let go" of your past self by doing something dramatic. "Sooner or later each of us does do something. The something is different for every woman I talked to, as minor as throwing out that pillowcase full of mismatched socks once and for all, or as major as interviewing for a new job, getting divorced, or going back to school."

What's striking about all of this heavy breathing about missing socks and adult extension courses is that Levine is actually not only a woman of significant accomplishment but one who has personified the feminist dream. She was the first editor in chief of *Ms.* and went on to helm the *Columbia Journalism Review*. She has published in major magazines and serves on boards. She has also been married for decades to the same man, with whom she has raised two sons. Yet in *Inventing the Rest of Our Lives*, she trembles like a wallflower. She worries about what to do with her life. She frets about how timid she has been in saying what she really thinks. There is not the remotest hint of the authority or insight that you'd expect to emerge after 35 years of successful struggle in the trenches of the New York publishing world and the post-sexual-revolution marriage culture. More striking, though she does not repudiate the feminism of her First Adulthood, there is no indication that the success it inspired did anything to bring her the satisfaction of a life well lived.

On the contrary. Like other Desperate Grandmas, she now sees careerism as a distraction from finding her "real self." In First Adulthood, say the acolytes of Second Adulthood, women figure out how to please the people who have power over them—parents, teachers, mates, and bosses. But when they are in what Levine labels "The Fuck You Fifties," they need "no longer care what other people think, only what I think." "If our 20s were about our physical peak and our 30s and 40s about work and productivity, after that it is about being and becoming you," Alexandra Mezey, a Second Adulthood life coach, promises on her website. Turning in your office keys can be "a chance to shift from work to the self, from responsibility to freedom," promise Alice Radosh and Nan Bauer-Maglin in *Women Confronting Retirement: A Nontraditional Guide.*

Somehow, though, the word "retirement" seems inadequate to the task of describing what happens to Second Adulteers when they cash their last paycheck. The Greatest Generation *retired;* they took up hobbies, joined book clubs, and went to lecture series near their Fort Lauderdale condos. Maybe they volunteered to read to poor kids at nearby schools. But Desperate Grandmas don't retire. They "pursue the passionate life," in Sheehy's words. They "follow their dreams." Levine celebrates a human rights lobbyist who becomes a devotee of "Neuromuscular Integrative Action" (a trendy mishmash of martial arts, yoga, and dance), a woman who is volunteering in an animal shelter, "a high-powered corporate executive" who at 55 joins the Peace Corps and goes to the Ivory Coast, and the psychologist Carol Gilligan, who is writing a novel: "Now sixty-eight, she has only just begun to explore new aspects of her talents."

The Desperate Grandma who *really* wants to pursue a passionate life might try something even more dramatic. She might file for divorce. Since the 1970s, Sheehy has been an enthusiastic promoter of the notion that divorce is not the tragedy once imagined but rather a fabulous opportunity for personal growth. A 50 percent divorce rate and the heavy damage inflicted on legions of children haven't dampened her enthusiasm. Sheehy eagerly cites a study showing two-thirds of divorces among couples over 40 initiated by women. That's because women, like men, "love the freedom that being single brings—citing independence, getting to keep their houses however they want, and not having to compromise with another person." Single women are in a better position to "get to know [their] new self." They also go on dates in the "midlife singles bazaar." Sheehy quotes an AARP survey about midlife singles: 75 percent of women who divorced in their fifties had a serious relationship after splitting from their husbands. The fact that more men—81 percent—had such relationships passes by without comment. At any rate, "lusty, liberated women" are finding lots of romance, much of it, she assures us, with younger men.

In fact, sex is at the center of the passionate life of the Desperate Grandma. When they were young, boomers famously discovered female sexual pleasure. Now they are discovering that the fun never ends. Along with *Sex and the Seasoned Woman,* we are seeing a slew of books about sex and the 60-something, including *Still Doing It, Better Than I Ever Expected,* Jane Juska's *A Round-Heeled Woman,* and Erica Jong's latest orgasm dispatch, *Seducing the Demon*—all of them filled with examples of how today's hip grandmothers are spending their leisure time. Jong and Juska write only about themselves, but the other writers go out hunting for horny females of a certain age interested in discussing their sex lives with a stranger. They find hordes of them.

What these women have to say will raise a lot of eyebrows. They are not just having sex; they are having the Best. Sex. Ever. They rejoice in their lovers, their fantasies, their sex toys, their orgasms—which they have in airplanes, in elevators, in the shower, in the woods. "Whether the writer is having sex after heart surgery, self-conscious about a wrinkly stomach hanging down, making love without an erection, experiencing leg cramps in certain positions, or worrying about dentures . . . ," writes Joan Price in a review of *Still Doing It*, "most report that sex after 60 is the best they've ever had." (The book, edited by Joani Blank, takes into consideration people of all sexual inclinations, including those who "choose self-pleasuring," though whether they also are enjoying the best they've ever had, she doesn't say.)

As for Price herself, the author of *Better Than I Ever Expected*: "Tell them at age fifty-nine, I'm having the best sex of my life!" she tells her publicist, who is no blockhead and does exactly that. And, of course, there is Jong, who in *Seducing the Demon* describes earth-moving tantric sex with her fourth husband. Even without Viagra—he's on heart medication—"He could have a whole-body orgasm while giving oral sex—his orgasm triggered by mine. He could feel electric shocks down his spine—as if the kundalini were rising"—which, despite its ominous sound, evidently poses no danger to cardiac patients.

The most remarkable of the older hotties, though her experience is considerably more ambiguous than the hear-me-roar subjects interviewed by Sheehy et al., is surely Jane Juska, the author of *A Round-Heeled Woman*. Juska's book chronicles her sexual adventures after she placed an ad in the *New York Review of Books* that read like this: "Before I turn 67—next March—I would like to have a lot of sex with a man I like. If you want to talk first, Trollope works for me." After whittling down the 63 responses she received in order to weed out the creeps, Juska, who had been divorced and largely celibate for 30 years (though she assures us that she was always game for "self-pleasuring"), is able to arrange a number of affairs that include sex, sometimes even with men she likes.

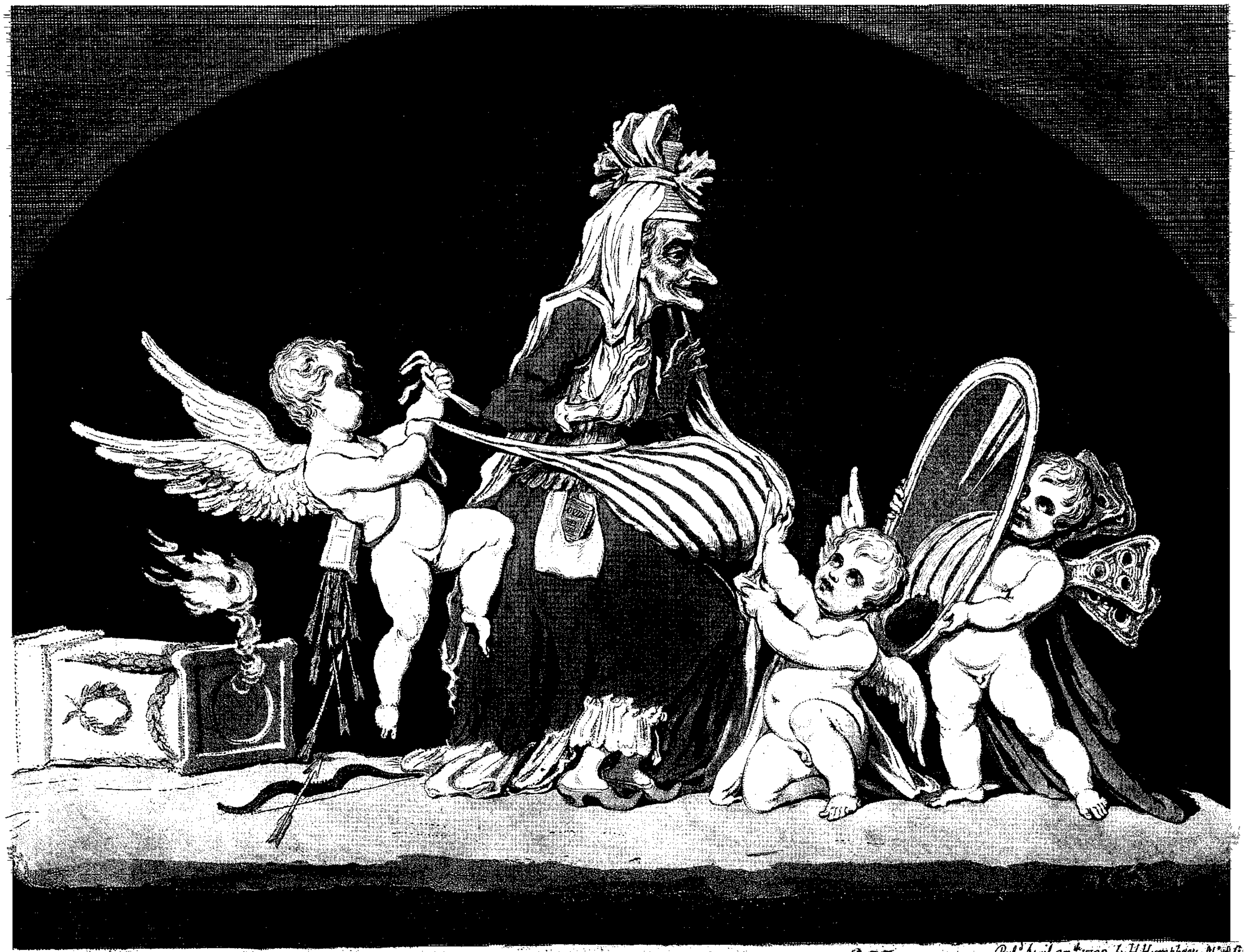
Still, her gentlemen callers don't deliver the romantic happiness so many of Sheehy's subjects seem to find or that Juska, despite the modest demands of her ad, clearly longs for. They include an 82-year-old who on their third day together announces, "I do not desire you," recommends she try a lubricant in her future booty calls, and steals her underwear; a retired doctor who talks on the phone to his steady girlfriend, while she, pining for more sex, cleans his bathroom; a New Englander who tells her that their weekend together helped him realize that he wants to go back to his girlfriend; and a "senior member of a well-regarded investment firm," who feels her up at their first meeting for all to see in the cafeteria of the Morgan Library and later refuses to kiss her during lovemaking.

A lesser woman might sprint to the nunnery, but Juska, to her credit, is resolute. She has a book to write—and to move a lot of books, you need a happy ending. In her final chapters, she describes a continuing affair with another lover, Graham, who is smart, well-read, handsome, prodigiously endowed, extremely skilled in the amorous arts—and 33. It seems necessary to add that he could well be a character Juska borrowed from James Frey's slush pile.

Juska's "journey" is of interest not just for its steam. It is also an unwitting illustration of the political aesthetics of the Desperate Grandma's revolution from within. Juska is not particularly well-off; she is a divorced, semiretired schoolteacher, living in a rented cottage. But she is highly cultured—the title of her book is an eighteenth-century allusion to a woman who easily falls horizontal; she lives in Berkeley and adores New York City. Sophisticated in her tastes, decidedly enlightened in her social and political sensibilities, she fills her conversations with her lovers with allusions to Arthur Miller, Edward Albee, Unesco, and Eric Rohmer. The 82-year-old underwear thief piques her interest after he writes a letter that reads in part:

JAMES GILLRAY, "A VESTAL OF -93 TRYING ON THE CESTUS OF VENUS" (1793)/COURTESY OF THE WARDEN AND SCHOLARS OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD/THE BRIDGEMAN ART LIBRARY

Urbanities



Gy. des. et fec.

A VESTAL of -93, trying on the CESTUS of VENUS.

Pub. April 29th 1793. by H. Humphrey. N. 18 O
Bond S

"Upon her fragrant breast the Zone was brac'd;
In it was ev'ry art, and ev'ry charm
To win the wisest, and the coldest warm.

Engrav'd from a Basso-relievo, lately found upon some fragments of Antiquity.

"When I returned from my tea plantation in Sri Lanka, I went straight to the Breadloaf Conference in Vermont"—perhaps a calculating parody of her own fantasy. Although she breaks her vow never to sleep with a Republican, she still never beds a plumber with a beer belly or an ex-marine from Arkansas—or if she does, she doesn't write about it—and it's hard to imagine that Random House would have published her book if she had. Juska is a member of the graying educated class, and if her audience can read about her senescent sexual adventures with any pleasure, it is partly because they carry a

New York Review of Books seal of approval.

Of course, part of what is driving all this early geriatric ink-spilling are the altered demographic realities of Americans living longer and staying healthier. There are 37 million women in their forties, fifties, and sixties living in America today, many of them single, and many of them financially independent. With more affluence, better health care, and advanced medical technology—Viagra, hip and knee replacements, Viagra, hormone therapy, face lifts, silicone, tummy tucks, hair color, Viagra—it's now a cinch to fool Mother Nature. Not so long ago, Yankelovich, Inc. surveyed baby boomers, asking them when they believe old age begins. The most common answer was 85—three years after the average American can expect to be dead and buried. In a world where a 60-year-old woman can give birth and the biological narrative—you're born, you reproduce, you get old, and you die—has gone haywire, inevitably some people will imagine that old age is history.

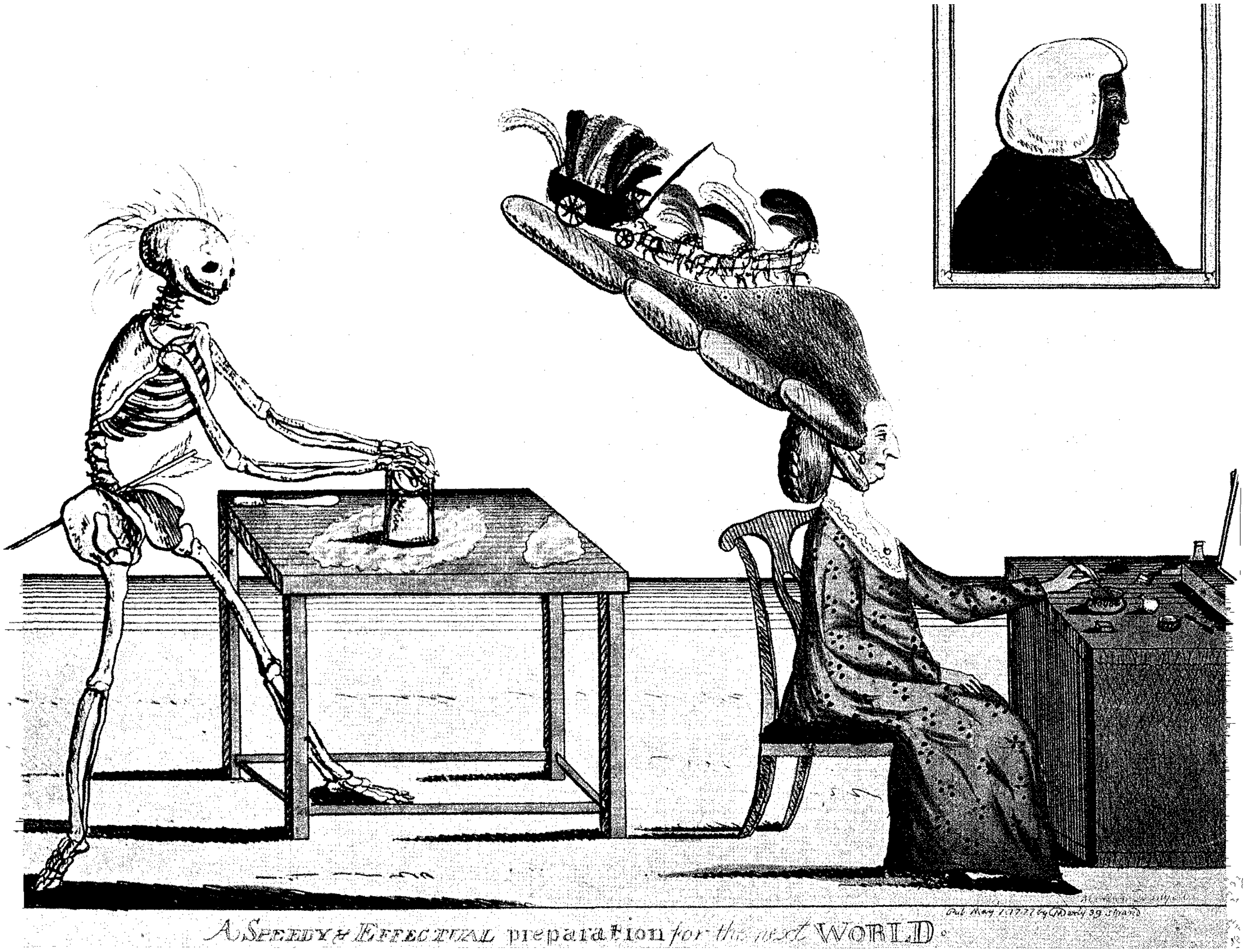
And that's not an altogether bad thing. There is something supremely American about these aging boomer women. Freedom, possibility, frontier, change—you see these words over and over again in Second Adulthood tracts. Second Adulthood reflects a zest for experience, for the new, for the personal gumption that is rooted in our national character and that has been the source of many of our blessings. It would also be curmudgeonly not to admire the energy and young-as-you-feel verve that Sheehy and her ilk want to bring to growing old. Who can entirely resist such determined optimism in the face of the harshest of realities? Yes, women might lose their memories, but they "gain insight." Yes, their stomachs fold into accordion pleats and their upper arms sag like forgotten balloons, but they know better than any Jennifer Aniston wannabe how to please a man.

No, what grates about the Desperate Grandmas is not their optimism. It is not their determination to firm their glutes or to do good deeds in West Africa or, for that matter, to study the Kama Sutra like Orthodox Jews study the Torah. It's their enthusiastic display of that chronic boomer disease: narcissism. Tom Wolfe once dubbed the 1970s "the Me Decade." Desperate Grandmas seem determined to make every decade a Me Decade. With its consciousness-raising, its denigration of family life, its rejection of the past, feminism has always flirted with excessive individualism, bordering on mere selfishness. Now, as Second Wavers like Steinem and Levine filter out politics, what's left of graying feminism are the dregs of self-actualization, passionate pursuits, and sexual self-expression.

Not that Desperate Grandmas are entirely without social conscience. As in Juska's case, blue-state politics seem to go with the territory. It's a way for women to reassure themselves that they are filled with enlightened altruism, despite all the time and money they lavish on their self-actualization. Jong proudly describes the anger she stirred up when she gave an anti-Bush graduation speech several years ago at a Staten Island college. (The "Boos were honors," she writes. "They meant I was questioning authority, speaking truth to power. They meant I was trying to tell the truth—my quixotic calling.") Margot, the corporate-executive-turned-Peace-Corps-volunteer Suzanne Levine interviews, captures the combination of unapologetic self-absorption and liberal sensibility that characterizes the Desperate Grandma. When asked whether she will go back to work after she returns from Africa, she says yes. "Maintenance is expensive. Being a jazzy older woman costs money. And that includes plastic surgery—when I get back from the Peace Corps." As the saying goes, you couldn't make this stuff up.

The memoirs by Erica Jong and Jane Juska in particular illustrate how feminism's promotion of self-actualization makes it particularly ill suited for women—no matter what their politics—who are racing

M. DARLY, "A SPEEDY AND EFFECTIVE PREPARATION FOR THE NEXT WORLD" (1777)/THE BRIDGEMAN ART LIBRARY


A Speedy & Effectual preparation for the next WORLD.
Pub. May 1 1777 by M Darly 39 Strand

toward the day when they will become deeply and humbly dependent on the kindness and love of others. In fact, Jong has always been a case study in the porous boundary between feminism and narcissistic indifference toward other people's reality. Her breakout novel, *Fear of Flying*, celebrated for its uninhibited depiction of female sexuality, was also thinly disguised autobiography that must have caused great pain to the two ex-husbands and numerous lovers she once had (presumably) cared for. That's not unusual: male novelists beyond number have betrayed family and lovers in their books, too. But in the spirit of those let-it-all-hang-out times, Jong won applause not despite her callous exhibitionism and disregard for others' privacy but because of them. Her exhibitionism, like that of the hordes of women confessors who have followed her, was taken as proof of her irreverent honesty, bravery, and admirably voracious libido.

Now a grandmother and still proudly proclaiming truth-telling as the impulse behind her sexual showboating, she has become in *Seducing the Demon* deeply embarrassing, repeating stories she has told in previous books, prattling on about her orgasms, her problems with thongs—"they tend to give me diaper rash"—and her fantasies about sex with former president Clinton: "Maybe I can dress up like his dear dead mother." Ironically, after *Fear of Flying*, reviewers compared Jong with Philip Roth and J. D. Salinger, two legendarily private men, who, though uninhibited in their fiction, would probably sooner get a sex-change operation than treat their readers to a glimpse of their jock itch. Feminism applauded Jong's exhibitionism, and though it may have given her fame, a yacht, and a face lift, it has been no friend to her art or to other Desperate Grandmas tempted to imitate her.

Nor was the self-absorption much of a friend to those closest to her. She collected lovers and husbands the way some people collect orchids. "I seem to have married people because they would make good material," she muses. The one who suffered the most was her daughter, Molly, the progeny of one of those husbands from whom she separated very early in the marriage. Jong appears to have had no interest in creating a coherent family life for her clearly troubled child. As she whiled away summers with her Venetian lover, her daughter, who has recently written an acid memoir describing those years, hung out at the Cipriani pool with her nanny and the neglected children of European celebrities. After divorcing Molly's father, Jong wrote a smiley-face children's book, *Megan's Book of Divorce*, telling the story of a lucky child who can now enjoy two sets of presents, two sets of toys, and two sets of families—though the book fails to include the procession of men, some of them young enough to be Molly's brother, traipsing in and out of her mother's bedroom. So Jong got her orgasms and fed her muse, while—unsurprisingly—Molly became a depressed teenager with a serious drug addiction.

In *A Round-Heeled Woman*, Jane Juska provides a similar case study in narcissism in the name of feminist self-actualization. Juska doesn't advertise in *The New York Review* for love or companionship; her goal, remember, is to "have a lot of sex with a man I like." In *Fear of Flying*, Jong introduced her famous fantasy of the "zipless fuck"—sex with a stranger for pure sensation, unencumbered by emotion, history, or family entanglements. Juska is advertising for a modified version of the zipless fuck; she at least wants to "like" the guy. But the impulse is similar, and the results predictable. "[F]or just about every man I have met on this journey," she writes toward the end of her book, "I am a swan song, a test case, a last hurrah, the tail end. . . . But the truth is no one wants me as a consort. I am a bend in the road. I am the dusty pike of stones. . . . Well, I expected this, but more and more, I wanted to be wanted and for more than three days. . . ." She is the recipient of precisely the sort of treatment she herself offers. She announces her willingness to use men, and they use her right back.

And as in the case of Jong, Juska's egotism turns out to have a long history that has badly hurt her child. Juska admits to leaving her son's father without much thought—"I just sort of forgot my husband"—and to being so self-involved that she doesn't notice when the child jumps into the deep end of a swimming pool without knowing how to swim. Inspired by the women's movement, she refuses to cook dinner for him (though she does learn to masturbate "without guilt"), and she considers changing her name from Juska, the name of her ex-husband, until her quasi-orphaned child wails: "If you change your name, I won't belong to anybody." By ninth grade, the child expresses his despair by shaving his head and becoming a drugged-out, petty-criminal runaway, living wretchedly on the Berkeley streets. Both Juska's and Jong's children are now grown, married, and seemingly on good terms with their mothers, but interestingly enough, they both independently refuse to read their books. You can't blame them.

For these books do not simply recall their mothers' profound, feminist-sanctioned self-absorption; they are expressions of it. Not all Desperate Grandmas are quite so ready to cross the boundary into Jong's and Juska's brand of exhibitionism, but their positive thinking shades easily into discomforting egotism. It's not just that older women continue to enjoy sex; it's that it has to be—in defiance of all common sense—Better Than Ever. It's not that they like working to rescue animals; they're Pursuing Their Passions. "They are the most amazing women our country has ever seen!" Levine quotes a gerontologist as gushing in *Inventing the Rest of Our Lives*.

Please. Narcissism is the last thing a society needs from its graying population. Their job is in part to counter youthful egotism, especially in an individualistic society like ours. No one should understand better than those getting on in years our dependency on one another. And no one should have a stronger intuition of our own fundamental inconsequentiality. We "fill a slot for a time and then move out; that's the decent thing to do: make room," John Updike's Harry Angstrom muses in *Rabbit at Rest*.

Desperate Grandmas may not need to move out yet. But it would be decent—quaint word!—if they would make some room.

Urbanities

The Terrorists Among Us

Theodore Dalrymple

It's not just Islam, but the tension between Islam and Western modernity, that makes them tick.

While I was on a visit to Toronto recently, police arrested 17 men, the oldest of them 43 but most much younger, on charges of plotting a terrorist attack. They wished, apparently, to blow up the parliament in Ottawa and publicly behead the prime minister. Cops caught them in the process of buying three times as much material for explosives as Timothy McVeigh used in the Oklahoma City bombing. Reporting the arrests, the *New York Times* called the men "South Asians"—though one of them was an Egyptian, two were Somali, and most had been born in Canada—thus concealing by an inaccurate euphemism the most salient characteristic of the alleged plotters: that they were all Muslims. The Canadian police, emasculated and even stupefied by the exigencies of political correctness (the modern bellwether of virtue), said that the 17 came from such diverse backgrounds that they were unable to discern anything in common among them.

Canadians, on the whole, reacted to news of the plot with a mixture of outrage and disbelief. A few responded more vigorously, smashing the windows of a Toronto mosque, which the press swiftly denounced as un-Canadian. But many wondered, why us? when Canada had been among the most tolerant and accommodating countries to its immigrants in the world, and where celebration of diversity for its own sake had been made almost an official fetish. Could it be that no liberal policy goes unpunished?

It rapidly became clear that no single sociological factor of the kind usually invoked to explain outrageous behavior—poverty, say, or racial discrimination—could explain the adherence of all 17 to the plot (assuming that the charges against them are true). The Somalis involved were born in Somalia in the midst of the chronic civil war there and came to Canada as refugees, where they soon fell into unideological delinquency before catching the Islamist bug; they were not economic success stories. Other alleged plotters, however, emerged from the well-integrated middle classes, such as the son of a successful doctor of Indian origin who had emigrated to Canada from Trinidad. The pictures of the houses in which some of the plotters lived and grew up must have made more than a few newspaper readers envious. Whatever explained the resort of the 17 to the scimitar and the bomb, raw poverty or the hopelessness of insuperable discrimination was not it.

It so happened that the Toronto arrests coincided with the publication in America of a novel by the distinguished writer John Updike, called *Terrorist*. This novel is an attempt to enter the mental world not of a young Canadian but of a young American would-be Islamist bomber. It received, to put it mildly, mixed reviews emphasizing its weaknesses far more than its strengths. Sociological or psychological accuracy and acuteness cannot entirely compensate for literary shortcomings in what is, after all, a literary artifact, but in view of the importance of the subject and the dearth of other attempts to treat it imaginatively, I think Updike deserves more credit than he has received.

The story concerns a young man called Ahmad Ashmawy Mulloy, the son of an Irish-American mother and an Egyptian immigrant father. The mother is a nurse's aide in a hospital and an aspiring, though untalented, amateur artist. Her husband, whom she met while he was an exchange student at what Updike calls the State University of New Jersey, abandoned her when Ahmad was three years old, never to be seen again; his failure to make good in America weighed heavily on his soul.

Ahmad and his mother live in New Prospect, New Jersey, a run-down postindustrial city now home mainly to blacks and immigrants. Ahmad attends the local high school, where he is of above-average scholastic ability; but, falling under the influence of Shaikh Rashid, the imam of a hole-in-the-corner mosque in New Prospect, he decides not to continue his education but to become a truck driver instead. That way he will not participate fully in the degenerate society around him. Becoming a truck driver is, for an 18-year-old of his intelligence and potential, like a spiritual retreat into the wilderness.

A guidance counselor at his high school, Jack Levy, a world-weary and washed-out Jew at the end of his career, tries to dissuade him from this course of action, which Levy supposes will destroy Ahmad's life chances. In the process, Levy winds up in a torrid affair with Ahmad's mother. By a coincidence of the novel's plot, the sister of Jack's wife, a woman of German Lutheran descent, is an assistant to a Donald Rumsfeld-like director of the Department of Homeland Security.

Ahmad goes to work for a cheap furniture store owned by Lebanese immigrants, whose son, called Charlie (but nonetheless a Muslim), persuades him to undertake a suicide mission to explode a bomb in the Lincoln Tunnel. Charlie is, in fact, an FBI agent who has infiltrated a band of extremists, of whom Shaikh Rashid is one; but his cover is blown and he is murdered brutally before the suicide mission can be averted. However, Jack Levy, via his contact with the Department of Homeland Security, which has passed on to him information concerning the proposed bomb attack, manages to avert it by persuading Ahmad, at the last minute, to desist.

Reviewers disparaged the implausibility of the plot, whose resolution relies upon creakingly contrived coincidences, and criticized the characterization as feeble. How Ahmad became so attached to his slender Muslim heritage, for example, rather than to his much stronger Irish Catholic one—his mother being the only parent he has ever known—Updike doesn't explain at all. Perhaps he had been taunted at school for his mixed parentage and decided that he might

Muslims in the West make for a potentially explosive culture clash.

PETER TURNLEY/CORBIS

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as well die for a Muslim sheep as a Christian lamb by adopting only the Egyptian moiety of his identity; or perhaps he realized in a subliminal way that in the modern multicultural world, there is more mileage in being a minority than in being a déclassé member of the mainstream. In the current climate, you can't fail as a minority: you can only be failed by others.

The book's dialogue, too, is frequently stilted and unbelievable. Ahmad, for example, often sounds more like a wooden, pedantic prig than a disaffected youth emerging from a New Jersey slum, tormented by inchoate existential doubts and anxieties. For example, when Charlie tells him that his attendance at the Islamic Center had declined and that the shaikh would like to see more of him, he replies: "To chastise me, I fear. Now that I work, I neglect the Qur'an, and my Friday attendance has fallen off, though I never fail, as you have noticed, to fulfill salat, wherever I can spend five minutes in an unpolluted place." I've met a lot of 18-year-olds, of many different types, from the slums, but I've never heard one talk like this.

Yet for all its weaknesses, the novel remains an impressive attempt to understand the worldview of a modern would-be Islamist terrorist, avoiding caricature and recognizing complexity. Without condoning terrorism and without any apologetics for those who commit it, the book invites us to see ourselves as others might see us and to look at the world through eyes other than our own. And this is surely part of the function of imaginative literature.

Updike is scarcely the first author to draw attention to the fact that terrorism is not a simple, direct response to, or result of, social injustice, poverty, or any other objectively discernible human ill. It is not the personal that is political, but the political that is personal. People with unusually thin skins ascribe the small insults, humiliations, and setbacks consequent upon human existence to vast and malign political forces; and, projecting their own suffering onto the whole of mankind, conceive of schemes, usually involving violence, to remedy the situation that has so wounded them.

Dostoyevsky knew this, but the author closest to Updike in spirit, if his great superior in felicity of execution, is Joseph Conrad, the Pole-turned-Englishman. Conrad experienced political persecution from the inside, having been exiled to Siberia during his childhood with his father by the tyrannical czarist regime. One might have expected him therefore to have sympathized with extremists of almost any stripe, but he understood only too well that those who opposed tyranny by terrorism objected not so much to tyranny as such but to the fact that it was not they who were exercising it. Indeed, the terrorist temperament was apt to see tyranny where there was none. As Conrad puts it: "The way of even the most justifiable revolutions is prepared by personal impulses disguised into creeds."

In Conrad's *The Secret Agent*, for example, the Professor—"his title to that designation consisted in having been once assistant demonstrator in chemistry at some technical institution," who quarreled with his superiors "upon a question of unfair treatment," and who had "such an exalted conviction of his merits that it was extremely difficult for the world to treat him with justice"—is a man who has devoted himself to devising bombs and detonators. Predisposed to dissatisfaction by his small stature and unimpressive appearance, he develops "a frenzied Puritanism of ambition" that seems once again, after September 11, only too familiar to us. "The extreme, almost ascetic purity of his thought, combined with an astounding ignorance of worldly conditions, had set before him a goal of power and prestige to be attained without the medium of arts, graces, tact, wealth—by sheer weight of merit alone. . . . To see [his ambition] thwarted opened his eyes to the true nature of the world, whose morality was artificial, corrupt, and blasphemous. . . . By exercising his agency with ruthless defiance he procured for himself the appearances of power and personal prestige."

Updike's *Terrorist* has much in common with Conrad's *The Secret Agent*, published 99 years previously. In both books, a double agent tries to get a third party to commit a bomb outrage; in both books, the secret agent ends up slain. In both books, the terrorists operate in a free society unsure how far it may go in restricting freedom to protect itself from those who wish to destroy it. The terrorists in Conrad are European anarchists and socialists; in Updike they are Muslims in America: but in neither case does the righting of any "objective" injustice motivate them. They act from a mixture of personal angst and resentment, which easily attaches itself to abstract grievances about the whole of society, thus disguising the real source of their consuming but sublimated rage.

Conrad tells us that one of the sources of terrorism is laziness, or at least impatience, which is to say ambition unmatched by perseverance and tolerance of routine. Mr. Verloc, the secret agent, has a "dislike of all kinds of recognized labour," which, says Conrad, is "a temperamental defect which he shared with a large proportion of revolutionary reformers of a given social state. For"—Conrad continues—"obviously one does not revolt against the advantages and opportunities of that state, but against the price which must be paid in the same coin of accepted morality, self-restraint, and toil. The majority of revolutionists are the enemies of discipline and fatigue mostly."

Ahmad's refusal to go to college might be interpreted in this light: for the path to constructive achievement is long, hard, and unsure, strewn with tedium and the chance of failure, while the life of destruction is exciting, even in its most tedious moments, because of the providential role that the destructive revolutionist has awarded himself. Once the magic wand of revolutionary destructiveness has been waved, even dull routine becomes infused with significance and excitement.

The mental laziness of Islamism, its desire that there should be to hand a ready-made solution to all the problems that mankind faces, one that is already known, and its unacknowledged fear that such a solution does not really exist, Updike captures well. When asked by his employer why he does not go for further education, Ahmad replies, "People have suggested it, sir, but I don't feel the need yet." Updike, as the omniscient narrator, adds: "More education, he feared, might weaken his faith. Doubts he held off in high school might become irresistible in college. The Straight Path was taking him in another, purer direction." The refusal of free inquiry derives from an awareness of the fragility of the basis of religious faith; and since certainty is psychologically preferable to truth, the former often being willfully mistaken for the latter, anything that threatens certainty is anathematized with fury.

Muslims are hardly the only ones, either in the past or the present, who experience difficulty in relinquishing their most cherished ideas and presuppositions. It is a normal human trait. (Darwin, in his *Autobiography*, tells us that when he came across a fact that threw some doubt upon the theory he was developing, he wrote it down, for otherwise he was sure to forget it.) But when a system of ideas and set beliefs claims eternal validity and infallibility, when people adopt that system as their primary source of identity, and when into the bargain those people find themselves in a position of long-standing and seemingly irreversible technical and economic inferiority and dependence vis-à-vis people with very different ideas and beliefs, resentment is certain to result. Not wishing to relinquish their cherished ideology—their only possible source of collective pride and accomplishment—they seek to explain the technical and economic superiority of others by different kinds of denigratory mental maneuvers. They may claim, for example, that the West has achieved its preeminence by illicit use of force and pillage, by exploiting and appropriating the oil of the Muslim lands, say.

The justice of a criticism does not depend upon the motive that lies behind it, of course. But the claim about the exploitation of oil is not merely self-serving; it is patently absurd. If anything, the direction of the exploitation has been precisely the opposite, for merely by virtue of their fortunate geographical location, and with scarcely any effort on their part, the people of the Arabian peninsula and elsewhere have enjoyed a high standard of living thanks entirely to the ingenuity of those whom they accuse of exploitation and without whom the oil resource would not be an economic resource at all.

But this fact does not mean that all Muslim criticism of the West is entirely wrong or beside the point. Updike starts his novel with a description of the world as Ahmad sees it, and a most uncomplimentary vision it is. What he sees is a world of brutal ugliness, vulgarity, egotism, and lack of restraint. He sees a civilization that is charmless and lacking in refinement and substance, even if the people living in it seem to be enjoying themselves at least some of the time. Their sorrows, however, are the consequence of their enjoyments, and outweigh them; their horizons are severely limited to the eternal present moment.

"All day long [at Central High School] girls sway and sneer," exposing their "bare bellies, adorned with navel studs and low-down purple tattoos," while "boys strut and saunter along and look dead-eyed, indicating with their killer gestures and careless scornful laughs that this world is all there is." An atmosphere of indulgence pervades the school. "The halls of the high school smell of perfume and bodily exhalations, of chewing gum and impure cafeteria food, and of cloth—cotton and wool and the synthetic materials of running shoes warmed by young flesh. Between classes there is a thunder of movement; the noise is stretched thin over a violence beneath, barely restrained."

Out in the run-down city, "former display windows [are] covered by plywood crawling with spray-painted graffiti." What do these graffiti mean? "To Ahmad's eyes, the bulbous letters of the graffiti, their boasts of gang affiliation, assert an importance to which their perpetrators have pathetically little other claim. Sinking into a morass of Godlessness, lost young men proclaim, by means of property defacement, an identity." The teachers at the school, weak or unbelieving Christians and Jews, preach restraint to the children without really believing in anything much themselves, and without practicing such restraint in their private lives. Tylenol Jones, a young black who takes an instant and violent dislike to Ahmad (in a society, or aggregation, of individualists and egotists, people dislike those who are very different from themselves), perfectly symbolizes the generalized egotism of society: he received his name merely because his mother happened to see a television advertisement for the product and liked the sound. Whimsical rejection of convention could scarcely go further; and such a rejection reduces freedom to nothing more than the practical expression of the first thing that comes into one's head, even if it is at the expense of another human being. As such, freedom seems to Ahmad to be not a blessing but a curse.

Reviewers have mocked and even reviled Updike for his unappetizing description, through the eyes of Ahmad, of the popular culture of underclass America, and for pointing to revulsion against it as a motive for a suicide bombing. Even if one allows that Updike's description is accurate (as I think any tolerably objective observer must), it is in fact so partial a characterization of the country in its entirety as to be utterly tendentious. It is to mistake the part for the whole, and it risks suggesting that Islamist bombers might have a point after all. Besides, there are far worse things in the world than the smell of chewing gum and bad cafeteria food, and far worse acts committed than the adornment of walls and other surfaces with ugly, hermetic, and no doubt idiotic signs. To complain seriously of what amounts to bad taste and make it a motive for mass murder, when the crimes of Hitler, Stalin, Mao, and Pol Pot are still within living memory, is—well, in bad taste.

But it seems to me that Updike rather than his critics is right—or rather, accurate. He is not trying to justify Ahmad but to explain him. How could Ahmad have developed a more rounded view of the social environment into which he was born, or have achieved some kind of mature historical perspective on it, without the aid and guidance of people who knew better, whose mental world was not circumscribed by New Prospect, New Jersey? His mother is unable or disinclined to provide him with any guidance. To understand the distinction between criticism of the way people choose to use their freedom and criticism of freedom itself requires some historical and philosophical sophistication, which it is the duty of schools to inculcate. By inference, Central High School has failed to do this where Ahmad is concerned, leaving his clever but uncritical mind a fallow field in which Shaikh Rashid can plant his ill-germinating seeds. The crude nostrums of Islamism rush in where the Enlightenment fears to tread. I have talked to a lot of young Muslim critics of Western society, living in the West, and few of them were aware of the philosophical basis of Western achievement, which they believed to be merely materialist and founded on crude plunder, never having heard any other viewpoint.

Updike also has an understanding of the role of sexuality in the formation of the Islamist terrorist mind-set. On the very first page, Ahmad demonstrates that he is a sexual being who is struggling to control his desires, because he realizes that when unbridled or uncontrolled, sexuality is dehumanizing. The description of the navel studs and purple tattoos lying low on the abdomen ends with his question: "What else is there to see?" Clearly he can imagine it and be attracted by it.

Later in the novel, a black girl called Joryleen, whom he knew at school, has since become a prostitute with Tylenol Jones as her pimp, and she seduces Ahmad to the point where she masturbates him to orgasm. He is not so very different, and has never been so very different, at least in his basic desires, from the mass of his fellow slum dwellers, whom he has hitherto despised and excoriated. He is attracted by what is repellent to him; his rejection of the society that produces such powerful attractants is what psychiatrists used to call, in the days when Freud was still a respectable figure, reaction formation. In resisting the hypersexuality of his environment, he is trapped into falsely denying his sexuality altogether.

All in all, then, Updike has produced a more convincing and subtle, and, in my view, accurate portrait of a young Islamist terrorist than he has generally received credit for—even for all his book's literary faults. He rightly sees Islamism in the West as culturally hybrid, rather than as a pure product of Islam: a reaction, albeit one consonant with certain Islamic traditions, to a very severe and, indeed, overwhelming cultural challenge from without rather than as something arising purely or spontaneously from within Islam itself. He understands the deeply human, but also deeply destructive, desire for a simple solution to all existential and practical problems at once. He is sufficiently imaginative to understand that our imperfect societies have more than enough within them to appall sensitive outsiders and marginals (as surely all conservatives should appreciate). He also realizes that violent repulsion can be the consequence of illicit attraction. And all this without for a moment suggesting that Islamic terrorism is other than a terrible scourge.

This is quite an achievement, even if his book will not outlive the Islamist threat, as Conrad's book has outlived the anarchist one.

Urbanities

The Last Full Measure

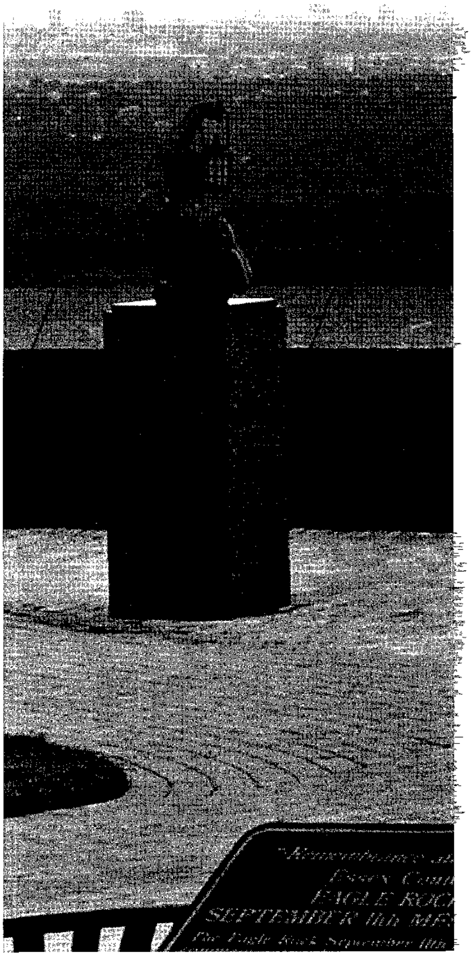
Steven Malanga

Gotham may not know how to honor the 9/11 dead, but the suburbs do.

From Lookout Point at Eagle Rock Reservation in West Orange, New Jersey, you see some of the most spectacular views in the New York metropolitan area. No wonder that early settlers used it as a surveying station and that in the Revolutionary War, Washington's army set up a post there to chart British movements. Today, the point reveals an unobstructed view of New York's skyline 15 miles away—which is why Essex County officials chose it as the site for a September 11 memorial. Opened barely a year after 9/11, the $1.2 million, privately financed memorial features a bronze sculpture of an American eagle in flight, inscriptions of the names of all those who died on 9/11, and individual tributes to rescue workers. In its first year, the site attracted some 75,000 visitors, and it continues to draw thousands seeking to remember the dead, to contemplate the heroic acts and sacrifices of that day, and to recall the Manhattan skyline back when the Twin Towers graced it.

The impressive Eagle Rock memorial is one of dozens that have gone up in and around the New York metropolitan area since 9/11, even as controversy and fecklessness have paralyzed efforts to create a memorial on the grounds of the former World Trade Center itself. At Ground Zero, the projected cost of the proposed memorial ballooned to a staggering $1 billion, even though no construction ever began. The commission formed to build the memorial, in utter disarray, has fallen far short of fund-raising goals, prompting the recent resignation of its head and the sharp downsizing of its plans. The monument's proposed design—dubbed by its creators *Reflecting Absence*—has faced intense criticism for its vacuity, fastidiously rejecting any tribute to the heroism of the day or the rock-solid American values that the terrorists attacked.

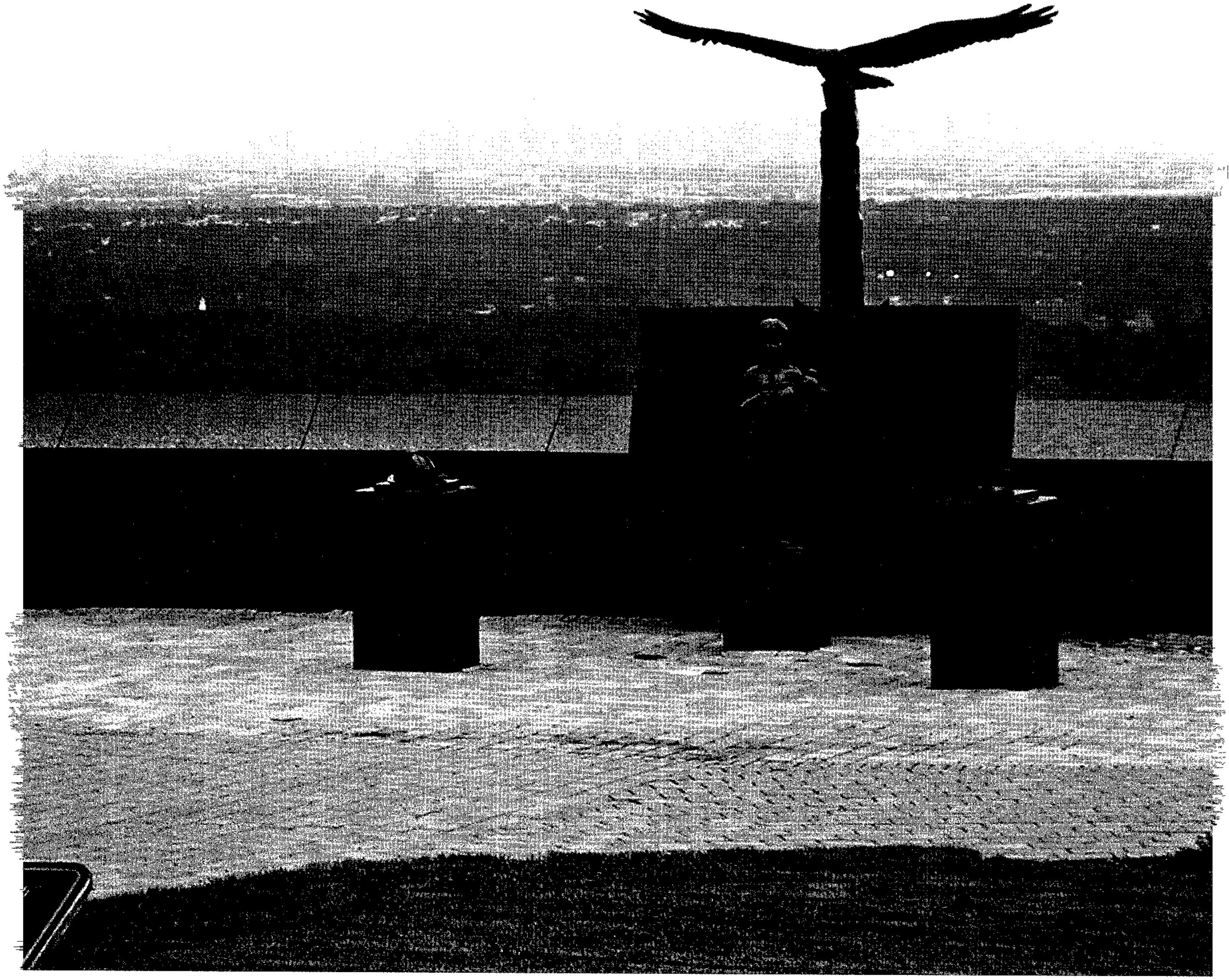
No such paralysis seems to have encumbered the dozens of commissions that local governments and ordinary citizens set up around the tristate area to honor the dead and remember the day. Though the terrorist attacks were a tragedy for the entire nation, they hit home most acutely in the

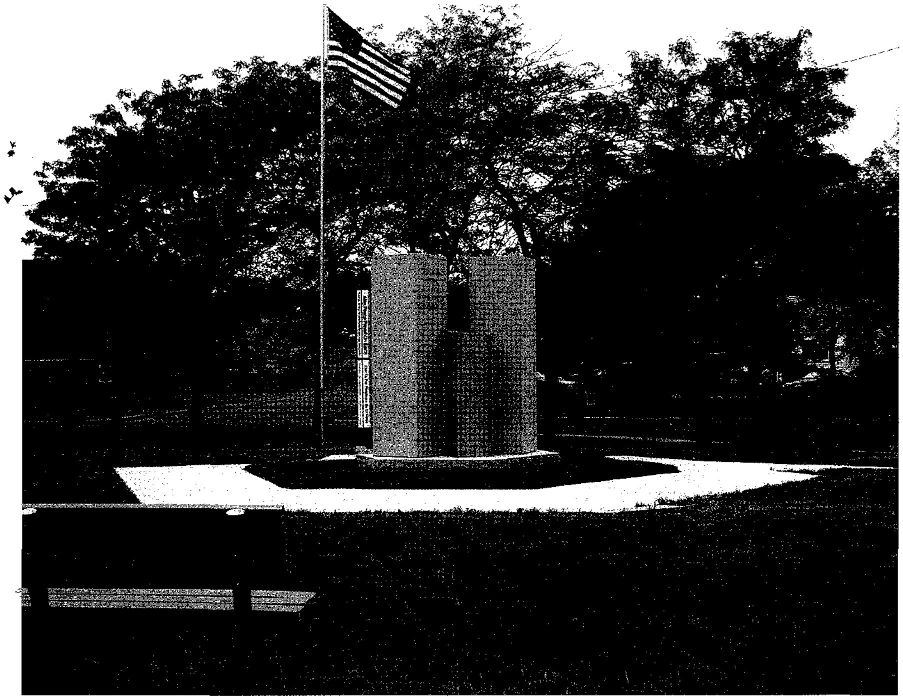


STEVEN MALANGA (6)

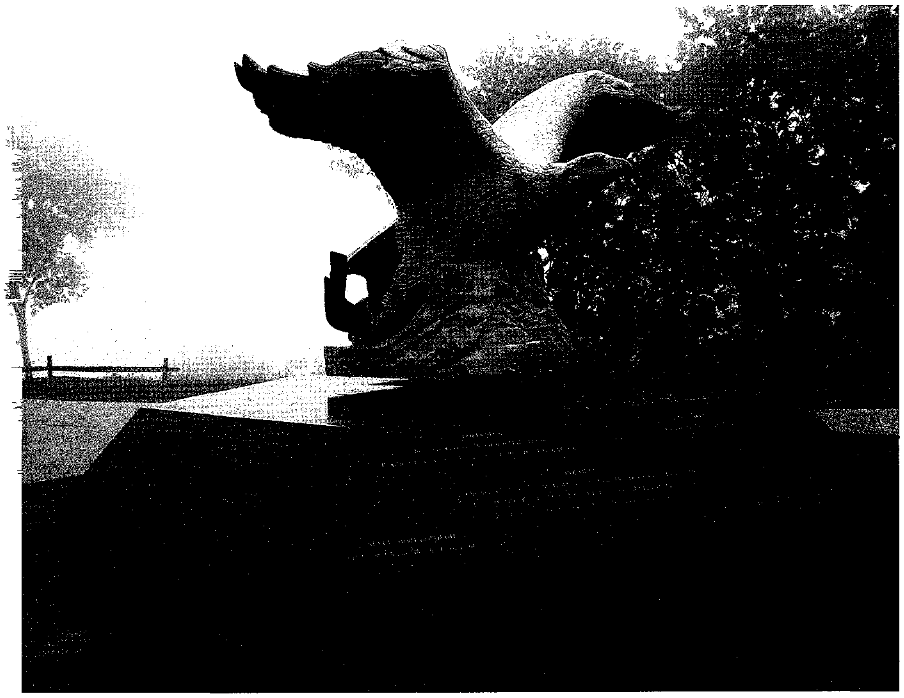
The Eagle Rock memorial in Essex County, New Jersey

Urbanities





Spotswood, New Jersey's 9/11 memorial



Franco Minervini's sculpture in Monmouth County, New Jersey

scores of commuter towns within 100 miles of New York City, where many World Trade Center workers lived. Those communities have responded with a wide array of memorials.

Most are modest in scope and cost, but they are often inspired and poignant. Some serve as gravestones for local victims who have no known resting place. Others commemorate the valor that Americans exhibited on 9/11, especially New York's rescue workers. By contrast, the World Trade Center site will have no unique memorial to the sacrifices of the city's firefighters and police. In an age when many memorials, like *Reflecting Absence*, are abstract gestures that avoid invoking anything except loss—and not even directly but in a glass darkly—some of these local monuments are throwbacks, robust statements of American ideals, rendered in an unapologetically realistic style that might dismay postmodern critics but that successfully translates our common feelings about September 11 into concrete form. Deeply moving, a tour of these memorials also reminds us of the gigantic failure that has left Ground Zero little more than an opening in the earth.

One thing that comes through in visiting these memorials is just how much people miss the Twin Towers. The powerful image of the original towers, as a confident emblem of Gotham's status as

***Angel in Anguish*, by Brian Hanlon, in Brick, New Jersey**

a global financial capital, dominates many of the sites. The memorial in Danbury, Connecticut, commemorating the dozens of state residents who died on 9/11, for example, features a 12-foot, 6,000-pound glass tower, with a smaller tower inside. The $130,000 monument, created in just under a year, shimmers in the daylight—a light, airy, peaceful tableau, in marked contrast to our memories of that day. In Manalapan, New Jersey, which lost 11 residents, the heart of the town's $107,000 memorial is a pair of seven-foot reproductions of the towers in light blue granite, sitting atop an 80-pound section of steel beam from the original towers. Spotswood, New Jersey's memorial consists of one-ton Vermont granite replicas of the towers, placed at the angle from which Garden State viewers used to see them.

While a celebrity committee has planned the WTC memorial site with distressing results, in some of these other monuments, the work of re-creating the towers has been the labor of love of just a few, or even of a single person. After 9/11, Jared Stevens, a firefighter in Tinton Falls, New Jersey, who had been at the World Trade Center on the morning of the attacks, labored for five weeks in his garage on two eight-foot models of the towers. He lavished attention on the details in the models, including some 40,000 holes drilled to create windows. The models went up in the town just a few days before Christmas 2001, when the pain of the attacks still seared. They'll remain there "as long as they hold up," Stevens has said.

No less clear than people's fondness for the missing towers is the admiration and gratitude they feel for those who worked as rescuers that day, especially the city's police and firefighters, many of whom headed fearlessly into the burning towers knowing that they might never come out.

Middletown, New Jersey's Memorial Gardens

STEPHEN J. CANGIALOSI
THE FINEST EXAMPLE OF A MAN
PERFECT SON
TRUE FRIEND
BELOVED HUSBAND
ADORED FATHER
WATCH OVER & GUIDE US
FOREVER MORE

A headstone in the Memorial Gardens

Many memorials, whatever else they say, take full note of the sacrifices of these rescue workers. The Ground Zero memorial, by contrast, will only scantly acknowledge their heroism, incorporating the insignias of their departments into the work but nothing else.

Perhaps the most robust and stirring tribute to rescue efforts sits in Pennsauken, New Jersey. Town leaders commissioned artist Brian Hanlon, who specializes in traditional sculpture and comes from a long line of firefighters, to create a life-size tribute to the survivors and the rescue workers who helped save them in a monument titled *We Shall Never Forget*. The $250,000 memorial boasts five life-size figures, including a dazed stockbroker helped by an emergency medical technician, a policeman, a firefighter, and a rescue dog, set against an 8-by-30-foot polished marble wall, inscribed with a 9/11 timeline. At the statue's foot, one reads the virtues that we honor in the rescuers: bravery, courage, and compassion.

Such realism is perhaps too unrefined for the elite commission members who selected the Ground Zero memorial design. But the vigorous affirmation of the rescuers' heroism reflects an attitude common among area memorials, if not always as elaborately detailed as in Pennsauken's massive monument. "A lot of the credit goes to the Pennsauken memorial committee for having the right ideas," says sculptor Hanlon. "Their work is in contrast to a lot of these elite committees which select memorials based on abstract designs that lack heart and soul."

September 11 wasn't just a day of private tragedy; it was also an attack on the United States—a national trauma. A number of memorials fittingly incorporate American iconography into their designs in a way that *Reflecting Absence* will not. Just as an image of an eagle towers over the Eagle Rock Reservation memorial, Monmouth County, New Jersey's memorial will also highlight this emblem of America. Artist Franco Minervini, born in Molfetta, Italy, where he watched his grandfather and other stone carvers work, drew inspiration from a twisted beam at the World Trade Center site to create a massive stone monument of an American eagle grasping the beam in its talons. "I wanted to get the symbol of freedom, of America, to take the physical beam and the souls of all those who perished and bring them up to heaven," Minervini said. The 5,000-pound sculpture, the centerpiece of the county's nearly $1 million memorial to the 147 county residents who died in the terrorist attacks, sits atop Mount Mitchell Scenic Overlook in Atlantic Highlands, with its panoramic view of the distant New York City skyline.

Lack of progress at Ground Zero has frustrated many victims' families, whose loved ones' remains have never been found and have no final resting place. In that absence, family members and friends have found consolation in the many memorials that have risen locally. The impetus to complete those memorials has seemed particularly urgent in some of the towns surrounding New York that suffered disproportionately high losses on 9/11.

The town of Babylon, Long Island, lost 48 residents that day and wanted to make a place for the many family members and friends of the dead to mourn. So out of the local beachfront, the town carved a one-acre memorial site that includes headstones for all the victims, adorned with photos and words of remembrance from family members. In Brick, New Jersey, the town installed a statue by Brian Hanlon, *Angel in Anguish*, to remember its nine local victims. The beachfront statue shows an angel weeping over a tableau of the New York City skyline with the Twin Towers still standing and an American flag flying over them. "The sculpture reflects the anguish I feel, but the angel is also a powerful figure, and you feel, looking at it, that after she's done mourning she's going to get up and do what has to be done to carry on," says Jennifer Sands, whose husband died in the Twin Towers. "None of us here in Brick has any remains or gravesites. This is our gravesite."

Residents of Middletown, New Jersey, didn't fully comprehend just how many of their neighbors worked in New York City until the evening of September 11, when police counted 192 cars left in the train-station parking lot. Though commuters stranded in the city would eventually pick up most of the abandoned vehicles, 37 residents of the town died in the attack—leaving a huge sense of loss and longing in the community.

To help fill the void, the town constructed a memorial garden with headstones for all the victims, where family members and friends frequently stop by to leave mementos and messages. On the day I visited the memorial in mid-May, a Mother's Day card sat propped up on the headstone of Lorraine Antiqua, a 32-year-old single parent who worked for Cantor Fitzgerald and left behind two young daughters. A few steps further on, someone had left two baseballs in small trophy cases before the headstone of Stephen Cangialosi, a Cantor Fitzgerald bond trader and ardent Yankee fan. Nearby, on the headstone of Jane Beatty, a cancer survivor who worked at Marsh & McLennan, family members inscribed, "You were gone before we knew it/And only God knows why."

But it's perhaps the memorial to the victim with no life story to recount and no place on official lists of the dead that is the most touching of all. John and Sylvia Resta of Bayside, Queens, a husband and wife who worked on the 92nd floor of Tower One at Carr Securities, died together that day. Sylvia was seven months pregnant. On the memorial to 9/11 victims in Hazlet, New Jersey, where John's family lived, is a tribute to the couple. Below their photos is a painting of a small angel, resting its head on a cloud, titled "Baby Resta." On the day I visited Hazlet, nearly five years after 9/11, someone had just left a small bouquet at the base of the memorial, under the angel, a touching tribute to the victim for whom we have no photograph and no memories, only a dream in a mourner's mind of what might have been.

Oh, to England

Real Crime, Fake Justice

Theodore Dalrymple

A scathing, politically incorrect book by an ex–probation officer tells some harsh truths.

For the last 40 years, government policy in Britain, de facto if not always de jure, has been to render the British population virtually defenseless against criminals and criminality. Almost alone of British government policies, this one has been supremely effective: no Briton nowadays goes many hours without wondering how to avoid being victimized by a criminal intent on theft, burglary, or violence.

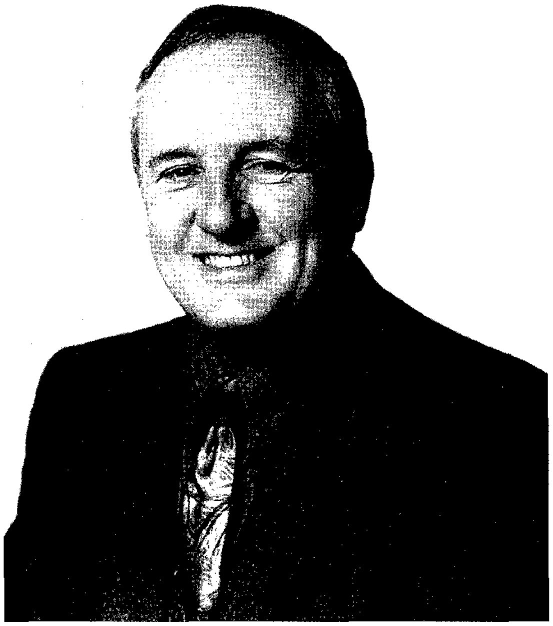
An unholy alliance between politicians and bureaucrats who want to keep prison costs to a minimum, and liberal intellectuals who pretend to see in crime a natural and understandable response to social injustice, which it would be a further injustice to punish, has engendered a prolonged and so far unfinished experiment in leniency that has debased the quality of life of millions of people, especially the poor. Every day in our newspapers we read of the absurd and dangerous leniency of the criminal-justice system. On April 21, for example, even the *Observer* (one of the bastions of British liberalism responsible for the present situation) gave prominence to the official report into the case of Anthony Rice, who strangled and then stabbed Naomi Bryant to death.

Rice, it turned out, had been assaulting women since 1972. He had been convicted for assaulting or raping a total of 15 women before murdering Naomi Bryant, and it is a fair supposition that he had assaulted or raped many more who did not go to the police. In 1982, he grabbed a woman by the throat, held a knife to her, and raped her. Five years later, while out of prison on home leave, he grabbed a woman, pushed her into a garden, held a knife to her, and raped her for an hour. Receiving a life sentence, he was transferred to an open prison in 2002 and then released two years later on parole as a low-risk parolee. He received housing in a hostel for ex-prisoners in a village whose inhabitants had been told, to gain their acquiescence, that none of the residents there was violent; five months after his arrival, he murdered Naomi Bryant. In pronouncing another life sentence on him, the judge ordered that he should serve at least 25 years: in other words, even now the law has not quite thrown away the key.

Only five days later, the papers reported that 1,023 prisoners of foreign origin had been released from British prisons between 1999 and 2006 without having been deported. Among them were 5 killers, 7 kidnappers, 9 rapists and 39 other sex offenders, 4 arsonists, 41 burglars, 52 thieves, 93 robbers, and 204 drug offenders. Of the 1,023 prisoners, only 106 had since been traced. The Home Office, responsible for both prisons and immigration, still doesn't know how many of the killers, arsonists, rapists, and kidnappers are at large; but it admits that most of them will never be found, at least until they are caught after committing another offense. Although these revelations forced the Home Secretary to resign, in fact the foreign criminals had been treated only as British criminals are treated. At least we can truly say that we do not discriminate in our leniency.

Scandal has followed scandal. A short time later, we learned that prisoners had been absconding from one open prison, Leyhill, at a rate of two a week for three years—323 in total since 1999, among them 22 murderers. This outrage came to light only when a senior policeman in the area of Leyhill told a member of Parliament that there had been a crime wave in the vicinity of the prison. The member of Parliament demanded the figures in the House of Commons; otherwise they would have remained secret.

None of these revelations, however, would have surprised a man called David Fraser, who has just published a book entitled *A Land Fit for Criminals*—the land in question being Great Britain, of course. Far from being mistakes—for mistakes repeated so often cease to be mere mistakes—all these occurrences are in full compliance with general policy in Britain with regard to crime and criminality.


COURTESY OF BOOK GUILD PUBLISHING

Author and former probation officer David Fraser

Fraser was a probation officer for more than a quarter of a century. He began to doubt the value of his work in terms of preventing crime and therefore protecting the public, but he at first assumed that, as a comparatively lowly official in the criminal-justice system, he was too mired in the grainy everyday detail to see the bigger picture. He assumed also that those in charge not only knew what they were doing but had the public interest at heart.

Eventually, however, the penny dropped. Fraser's lack of success in effecting any change in the criminals under his supervision, and thus in reducing the number of crimes that they subsequently committed, to the great misery of the general public, was not his failure alone but was general throughout the system. Even worse, he discovered that the bureaucrats who ran the system, and their political masters, did not care about this failure, at least from the point of view of its impact on public safety; careerist to the core, they were only concerned that the public should not become aware of the catastrophe. To this end, they indulged in obfuscation, statistical legerdemain, and outright lies in order to prevent the calamity that public knowledge of the truth would represent for them and their careers.

The collective intellectual dishonesty of those who worked in the system so outraged Fraser—and the Kafkaesque world in which he found himself, where nothing was called by its real name and language tended more to conceal meaning than to convey it, so exasperated him—that, though not a man apt to obtrude upon the public, he determined to write a book. It took him two and a half years to do so, based on 20 years of research, and it is clear from the very first page that he wrote it from a burning need to expose and exorcise the lies and evasions with which he lived for so long, lies and evasions that helped in a few decades transform a law-abiding country with a reputation for civility into the country with the highest crime rate in the Western world, with an ever-present undercurrent of violence in daily life. Like Luther, Fraser could not but speak out. And, as events unfolded, his book has had a publishing history that is additionally revealing of the state of Britain today.

By example after example (repetition being necessary to establish that he has not just alighted on an isolated case of absurdity that might be found in any large-scale enterprise), Fraser demonstrates the unscrupulous lengths to which both bureaucrats and governments have gone to disguise from the public the effect of their policies and decisions, carried out with an almost sadistic indifference to the welfare of common people.

He shows that liberal intellectuals and their bureaucratic allies have left no stone unturned to ensure that the law-abiding should be left as defenseless as possible against the predations of criminals, from the emasculation of the police to the devising of punishments that do not punish and the propagation of sophistry by experts to mislead and confuse the public about what is happening in society, confusion rendering the public helpless in the face of the experimentation perpetrated upon it.

The police, Fraser shows, are like a nearly defeated occupying colonial force that, while mayhem reigns everywhere else, has retreated to safe enclaves, there to shuffle paper and produce bogus information to propitiate their political masters. Their first line of defense is to refuse to record half the crime that comes to their attention, which itself is less than half the crime committed. Then they refuse to investigate recorded crime, or to arrest the culprits even when it is easy to do so and the evidence against them is overwhelming, because the prosecuting authorities will either decline to prosecute, or else the resultant sentence will be so trivial as to make the whole procedure (at least 19 forms to fill in after a single arrest) pointless.

In any case, the authorities want the police to use a sanction known as the caution—a mere verbal warning. Indeed, as Fraser points out, the Home Office even reprimanded the West Midlands Police Force for bringing too many apprehended offenders to court, instead of merely giving them a caution. In the official version, only minor crimes are dealt with in this fashion: but as Fraser points out, in the year 2000 alone, 600 cases of robbery, 4,300 cases of car theft, 6,600 offenses of burglary, 13,400 offenses against public order, 35,400 cases of violence against the person, and 67,600 cases of other kinds of theft were dealt with in this fashion—in effect, letting these 127,900 offenders off scot-free. When one considers that the police clear-up rate of all crimes in Britain is scarcely more than one in 20 (and even that figure is based upon official deception), the liberal intellectual claim, repeated ad nauseam in the press and on the air, that the British criminal-justice system is primitively retributive is absurd.

At every point in the system, Fraser shows, deception reigns. When a judge sentences a criminal to three years' imprisonment, he knows perfectly well (as does the press that reports it) that in the vast majority of cases the criminal in question will serve 18 months at the very most, because he is entitled automatically, as of right, to a suspension of half his sentence. Moreover, under a scheme of early release, increasingly used, prisoners serve considerably less than half their sentence. They may be tagged electronically under a system of home curfew, intended to give the public an assurance that they are being monitored: but the electronic tag stays on for less than 12 hours daily, giving criminals plenty of opportunity to follow their careers. Even when the criminals remove their tags (and it is known that thousands are removed or vandalized every year) or fail to abide by other conditions of their early release, those who are supposedly monitoring them do nothing whatever, for fear of spoiling the statistics of the system's success. When the Home Office tried the tagging system with young criminals, 73 percent of them were reconvicted within three months. The authorities nevertheless decided to extend the scheme. The failure of the British state to take its responsibilities seriously could not be more clearly expressed.

Fraser draws attention to the deeply corrupt system in Britain under which a criminal, once caught, may ask for other offenses that he has committed to be "taken into consideration." (Criminals call these offenses T.I.C.s.) This practice may be in the interests of both the criminal and the police, but not in those of the long-suffering public. The court will sentence the criminal to further prison terms that run concurrently, not consecutively, to that imposed for the index offense: in other words, he will in effect serve the same sentence for 50 burglaries as for one burglary, and he can never again face charges for the 49 burglaries that have been "taken into consideration." Meanwhile, the police can preen themselves that they have "solved" 50 crimes for the price of one.

One Probation Service smokescreen that Fraser knows from personal experience is to measure its own effectiveness by the proportion of criminals who complete their probation in compliance with court orders—a procedural outcome that has no significance whatever for the safety of the public. Such criminals come under the direct observation of probation officers only one hour a week at the very most. What they do the other 167 hours of the week the probation officers cannot possibly know. Unless one takes the preposterous view that such criminals are incapable of telling lies about their activities to their probation officers, mere attendance at the probation office is no guarantee whatever that they are now leading law-abiding lives.

But even if completion of probation orders were accepted as a surrogate measure of success in preventing re-offending, the Probation Service's figures have long been completely corrupt—and for a very obvious reason. Until 1997, the probation officers themselves decided when noncompliance with their directions was so egregious that they "breached" the criminals under their supervision and returned them to the courts because of such noncompliance. Since their own effectiveness was measured by the proportion of probation orders "successfully" completed, they had a very powerful motive for disregarding the noncompliance of criminals. In such circumstances, all activity became strictly pro forma, with no purpose external to itself.

While the government put an end to this particular statistical legerdemain, probation orders still go into the statistics as "successfully completed" if they reach their official termination date—even in many cases if the offender gets arrested for committing further offenses before that date. Only in this way can the Home Office claim that between 70 and 80 percent of probation orders are "successfully completed."

In their effort to prove the liberal orthodoxy that prison does not work, criminologists, government officials, and journalists have routinely used the lower reconviction rates of those sentenced to probation and other forms of noncustodial punishment (the word "punishment" in these circumstances being used very loosely) than those imprisoned. But if the aim is to protect the law-abiding, a comparison of reconviction rates of those imprisoned and those put on probation is irrelevant. What counts is the re-offending rate—a point so obvious that it is shameful that Fraser should have not only to make it but to hammer it home repeatedly, for the politicians, academics, and journalistic hangers-on have completely obscured it.

By definition, a man in prison can commit no crimes (except against fellow prisoners and prison staff). But what of those out in the world on probation? Of 1,000 male criminals on probation, Fraser makes clear, about 600 will be reconvicted at least once within the two years that the Home Office follows them up for statistical purposes. The rate of detection in Britain of all crimes being about 5 percent, those 1,000 criminals will actually have committed not 600, but at least 12,000 crimes (assuming them to have been averagely competent criminals chased by averagely incompetent police). Even this is not quite all. Since there are, in fact, about 150,000 people on probation in Britain, it means that at least 1.8 million crimes—more than an eighth of the nation's total—must be committed annually by people on probation, within the very purview of the criminal-justice system, or very shortly after they have been on probation. While some of these crimes might be "victimless," or at least impersonal, research has shown that these criminals inflict untold misery upon the British population: misery that they would not have been able to inflict had they been in prison for a year instead of on probation.

To compare the reconviction rates of ex-prisoners and people on probation as an argument against prison is not only irrelevant from the point of view of public safety but is also logically absurd. *Of course* the imprisoned will have higher reconviction rates once they get out of jail—not because prison failed to reform them, but because it is the most hardened, incorrigible, and recidivist criminals who go to prison. Again, this point is so obvious that it is shameful that anyone should have to point it out; yet politicians and others continue to use the reconviction rates as if they were a proper basis for deciding policy.

Relentless for hundreds of pages, Fraser provides examples of how the British government and its bloated and totally ineffectual bureaucratic apparatus, through moral and intellectual frivolity as well as plain incompetence, has failed in its elementary and sole inescapable duty: to protect the lives and property of the citizenry. He exposes the absurd prejudice that has become a virtually unassailable orthodoxy among the intellectual and political elite: that we have too many prisoners in Britain, as if there were an ideal number of prisoners, derived from a purely abstract principle, at which, independent of the number of crimes committed, we should aim. He describes in full detail the moral and intellectual corruption of the British criminal-justice system, from police decisions not to record crimes or to charge wrongdoers, to the absurdly light sentences given after conviction and the administrative means by which prisoners end up serving less than half their time, irrespective of their dangerousness or the likelihood that they will re-offend.

According to Fraser, at the heart of the British idiocy is the condescending and totally unrealistic idea—which, however, provides employment opportunities for armies of apparatchiks, as well as being psychologically gratifying—that burglars, thieves, and robbers are not conscious malefactors who calculate their chances of getting away with it, but people in the grip of something rather like a mental disease, whose thoughts, feelings, and decision-making processes need to be restructured. The whole criminal-justice system ought therefore to act in a therapeutic or medical, rather than a punitive and deterrent, fashion. Burglars do not know, poor things, that householders are upset by housebreaking, and so we must educate and inform them on this point; and we must also seek to persuade them of something that all their experience so far has taught them to be false, namely that crime does not pay.

All in all, Fraser's book is a searing and unanswerable (or at least so far unanswered) indictment of the British criminal-justice system, and therefore of the British state. As Fraser pointed out to me, the failure of the state to protect the lives and property of its citizens, and to take seriously its duty in this regard, creates a politically dangerous situation, for it puts the very legitimacy of the state itself at risk. The potential consequences are incalculable, for the failure might bring the rule of law itself into disrepute and give an opportunity to the brutal and the authoritarian.

You might have thought that any publisher would gratefully accept a book so urgent in its message, so transparently the product of a burning need to communicate obvious but uncomfortable truths of such public interest, conveyed in such a way that anyone of reasonable intelligence might understand them. Any publisher, you would think, would feel fortunate to have such a manuscript land on his desk. But you would be wrong, at least as far as Britain is concerned.

So uncongenial was Fraser's message to all right-thinking Britons that 60 publishers to whom he sent the book turned it down. In a country that publishes more than 10,000 books monthly, not many of which are imperishable masterpieces, there was no room for it or for what it said, though it would take no great acumen to see its commercial possibilities in a country crowded with crime victims. So great was the pressure of the orthodoxy now weighing on the minds of the British intelligentsia that Fraser might as well have gone to Mecca and said that there is no God and that Mohammed was not His prophet. Of course, no publisher actually told him that what he said was unacceptable or unsayable in public: his book merely did not "fit the list" of any publisher. He was the victim of British publishing's equivalent of Mafia *omerta*.

Fortunately, he did not give up, as he sometimes thought of doing. The 61st publisher to whom he sent the book accepted it. I mean no disrespect to her judgment when I say that it was her personal situation that distinguished her from her fellow publishers: for her husband's son by a previous marriage had not long before been murdered in the street, stabbed by a drug-dealing Jamaican immigrant, aged 20, who had not been deported despite his criminal record but instead allowed to stay in the country as if he were a national treasure to be at all costs cherished and nurtured. Indeed, in court, his lawyer presented him as an unemployed painter and decorator, the victim of racial prejudice (a mitigating circumstance, of course), a view that the prosecution did not challenge, even though the killer had somehow managed alchemically to transmute his unemployment benefits into a new convertible costing some $54,000.

The maternal grandmother of the murdered boy, who had never been ill in her life, died of a heart attack a week after his death, and so the funeral was a double one. It is difficult to resist the conclusion that the killer killed not one but two people. He received a sentence of eight years—which, in effect, will be four or five years.

I asked the publisher the impossible question of whether she would have published the book if someone close to her had not had such firsthand experience of the frivolous leniency of the British criminal-justice system. She said she thought so: but what is beyond dispute is that the murder made her publication of the book a certainty.

A *Land Fit for Criminals* has sold well and has been very widely discussed, though not by the most important liberal newspapers, which would find the whole subject in bad taste. But the book's publishing history demonstrates how close we have come to an almost totalitarian uniformity of the sayable, imposed informally by right-thinking people in the name of humanity, but in utter disregard for the truth and the reality of their fellow citizens' lives. Better that they, the right-thinking, should feel pleased with their own rectitude and broadmindedness, than that millions should be freed of their fear of robbery and violence, as in crime-ridden, pre-Giuliani New York. Too bad Fraser's voice had to be heard over someone's dead body.

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Letters

Imperial Iran?

To the editor:

Mark Steyn's "Facing Down Iran" [Spring 2006] eloquently articulates what I have long felt about the Iranian regime and our country's weak responses. I also appreciate that Steyn seems to acknowledge that our failures have been bipartisan. I only depart from him when he seems to credit Iran for creating Islamic imperialism. Islam has always been imperialistic. It also has always been contemptuous of the rights of non-Islamic nations. Thomas Jefferson was frankly told by an ambassador of the Barbary States that the seizure of U.S. shipping was commanded by the Prophet. That arrogance is alive and well across the Islamic world today.

Edward Wayland
Via e-mail

To the editor:

Mark Steyn makes no mention of the internal contradictions within Iran. In this respect, his argument replicates the remarkable failure of Western intelligence analysts to see the signs of the impending collapse of Communism in the 1980s.

Iran has a kind of democracy. Certainly no one would mistake it for Western democracy, but it has an elected political leadership, not a dictatorship, and a noisy, if filtered, political discourse. Ahmadinejad was elected in a close election. Many people opposed him, and most of those people are not being thrown in jail. If he doesn't deliver the goods on his promises for material progress, he may be thrown aside fairly quickly.

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The radical mullahs have an ideological commitment, and a political advantage, in making their constituents feel threatened by the Great Satan. A military strike will simply strengthen their hand. If, instead, the United States responds with firm but patient resolve and multilateral pressure, the moderates may yet prevail. The demographics are in their favor.

Paul Ingmundson
Via e-mail

To the editor:

I am reminded of two sentences a Palestinian Muslim in Jerusalem told me: "We just want a little peace. And when we get a little piece, we

Letters

want another little piece." Steyn makes it clear that the West doesn't hear the second sentence, while that's all that Iran hears.

Patrick Meagher
Via e-mail

Good for the Michigander

To the editor:

Thanks to Harry Stein for a fair analysis of the Michigan Civil Rights Initiative ["A Preemptive Surrender," Spring 2006]. It's indeed a sad betrayal of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that an almost identical initiative is being targeted by big labor, big business, and big government, led by scores of blacks and liberal whites who think that they own civil rights as an ideal. Read the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and you'll see that its language is almost identical to the MCRI's, stopping the government from discriminating for or against anyone on the basis of race, gender, skin color, ethnicity, or nationality. The biggest "coalition" is still for it, not against it—Michigan's citizens who have seen that 40 years of race-based affirmative action have divided us and need to end.

Diane Carey
Owosso, MI

Houston, They Have a Problem

To the editor:

Nicole Gelinas's article about Katrina evacuees in Houston ["Houston's Noble Experiment," Spring 2006] raises the question of how the government of New Orleans became so dysfunctional as to permit the development of an intractable underclass. Unlike Houston, cities in Louisiana do not have the power of annexation, especially across parish lines. As middle-class residents fled crime and non-performing public schools, the majority of voters in Orleans Parish came to be those for whom the stalled criminal-justice system and failed educational system were just fine. Efforts to elect judges who were hard on criminals, and to elect school board officials who would require students to pass achievement tests before being promoted, were met with cries of unfairness and racism.

Perhaps if, as my husband and I did, other middle-class families had determined to stay in the city to solve its problems, much misery could have been avoided. Instead, local politics allowed economically and socially functioning families to believe that they could escape the problems of the city by moving across the parish line. We have paid the price of that parochialism over the last three decades, as first our friends, and now our children, fled the intransigent poverty of the city, which spilled over to the entire metropolitan area.

The national news media do not understand that under Ray Nagin, New Orleans had been poised to become a functional city, and an economic resurgence was within grasp. Nagin, elected mayor two years ago by a coalition of black and white middle-class New Orleanians, filled potholes and created online access to many city forms and services, as promised. He was coasting to reelection when the disaster of Katrina created the ultimate no-win situation.

As a temporary evacuee housed by cousins in Houston, I sincerely thank Houstonians for all the kindness and goodwill that they extended to us. Perhaps the sheer size of Houston's population will help it assimilate the remaining Katrina evacuees, and change the self-defeating lifestyle that Gelinas describes.

Janice Barry
New Orleans, LA

Nicole Gelinas responds:

Although Houston has partly alleviated the effects of middle-class flight through annexation, it has not been a cure-all. In fact, it is politically impossible for Houston to annex its wealthiest suburbs and exurbs, such as The Woodlands.

As for New Orleans's pre-Katrina dysfunction: beginning in the early 1960s, the city's traumatic experience with public school desegregation, which sent thousands of white residents from neighborhoods like the Ninth Ward across the parish border to St. Bernard, exacerbated the familiar urban story of middle-class exodus. As Ms. Barry notes, this sudden destabilization helped create an intractable underclass culture in New Orleans that continued to grow over the decades, as fewer and fewer middle-class residents were left to advocate for real changes in

Letters

the city's failing school and criminal-justice systems.

Ms. Barry argues that if middle-class residents hadn't left New Orleans, its situation would not have grown so desperate. But thousands of New Orleanians, black and white, continued to leave in the seventies, eighties, and nineties *because* of the city's desperate situation. One cannot blame them for fleeing instead of staying to fight. If governments try to stop their flight from high taxes and social disintegration through annexation, most will just move further away.

Further, I disagree that New Orleans was "poised to become a functional city" before Katrina. While Mayor Nagin deserves credit for his pre-Katrina initiatives, including trying to change the city's climate of corruption, he has made no progress before or after the storm in solving the city's real problem: violent crime. Indeed, in the months before Katrina, New Orleans was grappling with a sudden spike in its already unacceptable homicide rate.

Jersey Blues

To the editor:

I've spent a lifetime involved in Republican politics in New Jersey. My only criticism of Steven Malanga's "The Mob That Whacked Jersey" [Spring 2006] is that it gives my party, and particularly former governor Christie Whitman, a free pass. It's true that she cut taxes modestly. But it's also true that she increased state spending by 50 percent and nearly quadrupled state borrowing, and she did so with the eager cooperation of an entirely Republican legislature.

A truly conservative Republican party would be a formidable opponent for the unions and public-employee mafia. Sadly, we have none.

Jack Mozloom
Hamilton, NJ

To the editor:

My wife and I are both 60, and moved to our present house in Princeton in 1997. Our property taxes have gone from $7,000 to over $24,000 per year. At this rate (almost 400 percent over eight years), when we are aged 80, our taxes will be over $500,000 per year. No one at any stage of life, much less old age, can save for that kind of meltdown, and increased property values, which have merely doubled, not quadrupled, offer no comfort unless you sell out.

Just this week, we decided to sell our house and downsize (we'd rather lose our shirts on a condo than on a five-bedroom). And we've decided to give Corzine until, at the latest, the third year of his term to do something about this, or we'll have to leave New Jersey in a desperate act of self-preservation. But we're afraid that if we wait until 2009 to cash out, the property values in this state will be in utter collapse, as millions of others realize they have no choice but to leave. Will the last public employee please turn out the lights?

Owen Leach
Princeton, NJ

Steven Malanga responds:

In the long story of New Jersey's decline, many public officials haven't measured up. Governor Whitman cut taxes and then, when a buoyant economy produced budget surpluses, she and the state legislature spent them. Jersey would certainly be better off if she hadn't, but her fiscal fecklessness pales in comparison with Governor Jim McGreevey's, who hiked taxes more than any other governor in the nation during the last recession—and then went even further and borrowed nearly $2 billion to finance Jersey's operating budget, a move that violated every basic rule of state fiscal management. Whitman failed to use the good times to cut taxes further and improve Jersey's competitive environment; McGreevey severely worsened the state's competitive position.

The Naked Truth

To the editor:

David Schoenbrod's "Toxic Regulation" [Spring 2006] stated that Naked Juice was a unit of Chiquita Brands. In fact, Chiquita sold Naked Juice in June 2000 to California Day-Fresh Foods, Inc., and has had no ownership interest in Naked Juice since the sale.

Mike Mitchell
Director, Corporate Communications
Chiquita Brands International

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Steven Malanga is a contributing editor of *City Journal* and a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute. His current book, *The New New Left,* is a collection of his *City Journal* essays.

Sol Stern is a contributing editor of *City Journal* and the author of *Breaking Free: Public School Lessons and the Imperative of School Choice.*

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It Still Leaves a Bad Taste

Edmund Janko

Not long ago, when a study from the left-leaning Applied Research Center charged a "deep pattern of institutional racism" in the disciplinary practices of public school districts around the country, it brought back some memories.

More than 25 years ago, when I was dean of boys at a high school in northern Queens, we received a letter from a federal agency pointing out that we had suspended black students far out of proportion to their numbers in our student population. Though it carried no explicit or even implicit threats, the letter was enough to set the alarm bells ringing in all the first-floor administrative offices.

When my supervisor, the assistant principal, showed me the letter, she merely shook her head and looked downcast. She said nothing, but her body language told me that it was probably time to mend our errant ways.

And when I passed the news on to our chief security guard that the feds were on our case, he merely chuckled and said, "They're bad"—meaning our rowdy clientele, which I took as confirmation of what I still believe: that until then, I hadn't recommended suspension for anyone who didn't richly deserve it.

There never was a smoking-gun memo, or a special meeting where the word got out, and I never made a conscious decision to change my approach to punishment, but somehow we knew we had to get our numbers "right"—that is, we needed to suspend fewer minorities or haul more white folks into the dean's office for our ultimate punishment.

What this meant in practice was an unarticulated modification of our disciplinary standards. For example, obscenities directed at a teacher would mean, in cases involving minority students, a rebuke from the dean and a notation on the record or a letter home rather than a suspension. For cases in which white students had committed infractions, it meant zero tolerance. Unofficially, we began to enforce dual systems of justice. Inevitably, where the numbers ruled, some kids would wind up punished more severely than others for the same offense.

I remember one case in particular. It was near the end of the day, and the early-session kids were heading toward the exits. I stood in front of my office looking deanlike, establishing the presence of *authority* to ensure orderly dismissal. It didn't entirely work. The boy was a white kid, tall, with an unruly mop of blond hair. He was within 200 feet of the nearest exit and blessed freedom. But he couldn't wait. The nicotine fit was on him, and he lit a cigarette barely two yards from me. I pounced, and within 20 minutes he was suspended—for endangering himself and others.

Surely we acted within the boundaries of our authority, and, as it emerged during the suspension hearing in the principal's office, the boy was having academic problems that his father was only dimly aware of. So the whole incident might have accomplished something positive in the end.

But, of course, we might have achieved the same result and arranged a parent conference without resorting to suspension. The kid wasn't a chronic troublemaker—indeed, until now he'd been a complete stranger to the dean's office. It was a first offense. And keeping him out of school for a whole week, the maximum that state law allows, was obviously not going to help him with his grades.

During the principal's hearing, as I sat across the table from the boy and his father, I recalled a classic essay that I had often taught my senior English classes. It was by George Orwell, and it recalled an unpleasant incident during his service as a policeman in Burma. Knowing that he was doing wrong, Orwell shot an elephant to save face before a mocking crowd of natives. No one suggested that we had acted incorrectly. Kids in our charge had to learn right from wrong, we told ourselves. But, more than two decades later, I still can't escape the nagging thought that, though we had other choices, better suited for the boy's welfare, at bottom all of us just wanted to get our numbers right. ◆

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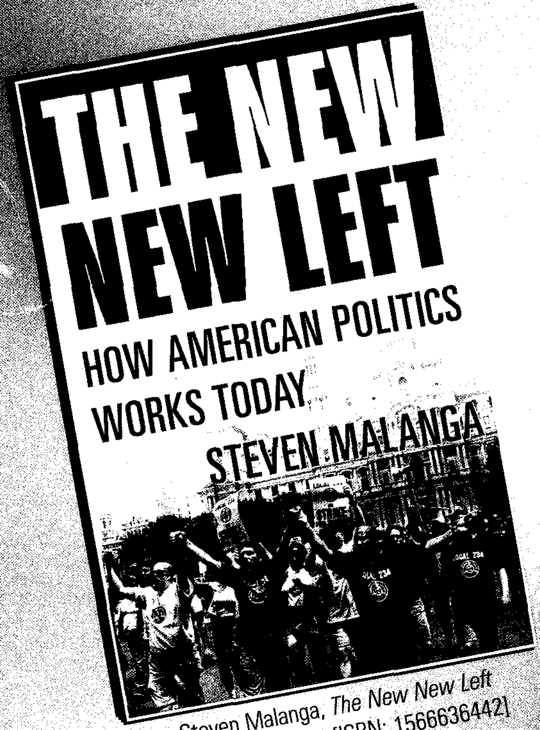
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HOW AMERICAN POLITICS WORKS TODAY
STEVEN MALANGA

Steven Malanga, *The New New Left*
Ivan R. Dee, 2005 [ISBN: 1566636442]
". . . guides us through America's
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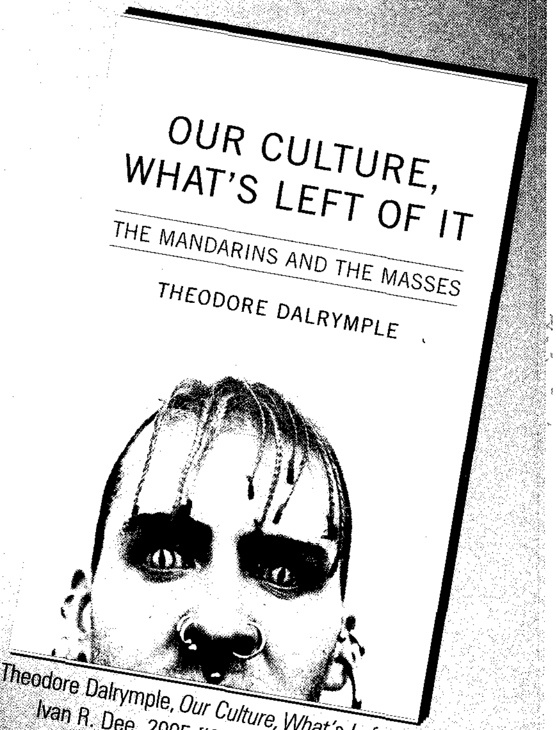
-Amity Shlaes, *Financial Times*


OUR CULTURE, WHAT'S LEFT OF IT
THE MANDARINS AND THE MASSES
THEODORE DALRYMPLE

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". . . the Orwell of our time."
-Denis Dutton, *Arts & Letters Daily*
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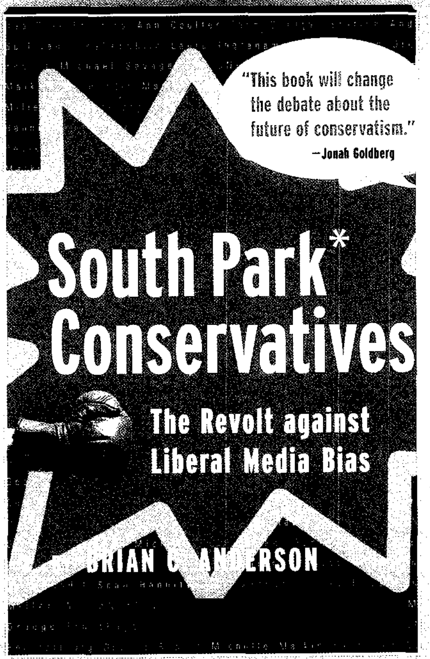
-Roger Kimball, *The New Criterion*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